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SONGS AND SLANG
OF THE BRITISH SOLDIER: 1914-1918

EDITED BY
JOHN BROPHY
AND
ERIC PARTRIDGE

SECOND EDITION
REVISED AND ENLARGED

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PREFACE
TO THE FIRST EDITION

If one left such a book any longer, it would be very difficult to collect the slang, and still more difficult to remember and collect the songs. It may be in place to say that both the editors served actively during the greater part of the War.

It is not possible to declare that this collection is complete, depending as it does on memory and oral tradition. Moreover, propriety has suppressed one or two of the songs and amended a few others. But every endeavour has been made by consulting men of different ranks and widely varying experience to include all soldiers' songs which were in use throughout the Army during 1914–1918, and not restricted to particular formations.

In the glossary, the editors have aimed to give not a mere dictionary-list, but a record-by-glimpses of the British soldiers' spirit and life in the years 1914–1918. Some of the comments are far from "official" in tone and in matter, but the editors believe there will be no confusion between what is recorded as fact and what is opinion. They do not claim that these war-time "grouses" and post-war reflections mirror the attitude of *everyone* who served (one of the editors is now a convinced pacifist). But they believe that substantially these are the views of the majority of war-time soldiers, and that they have not portrayed their former comrades either as supermen or as whiners, as sots or as saints.

The editors wish to thank Major Gordon Innes,

Captain Bertram Ratcliffe, and Messrs. T. E. Shaw and Hugh Kimber, for helpful comments on, and suggestions for, the glossary; a number of modest helpers in collecting the songs can be thanked only thus anonymously.

London, May 25th, 1930.

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Songs and Slang of the British Soldier: 1914–1918
Limited in the first edition
to 1,000 copies,
of which 900 were for sale at 7*s.* 6*d.*
and 50 bound in buckram, numbered and signed,
at 30*s.*
This, the second edition,
consists of 1,000 copies at 7*s.* 6*d.*

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

WHAT songs the sirens sang, as Sir Thomas Browne observed, we shall never now learn. But our deficiency does not stop there. The chanties with which Odysseus and his crew cheered themselves round the Mediterranean coasts are equally lost to us. So with the songs of Alexander's men marching into India and Hannibal's mercenaries crossing the Alps. Cæsar's legions, the long succession of mediæval levies, Marlborough's, Wellington's and Napoleon's armies, all in their time sang lustily, but words and melodies have perished, escaping even the formal sepulchres of the history books. From the more recent Crimean and South African wars the only songs that survive are of the concert room and the music-hall. It therefore seemed a worthy task to set down—twelve years after the Armistice of 1918 and before memories have grown entirely confused and dim—those songs which the British soldier sang out of his own invention in Flanders, France, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, Salonika and the other combative areas of the Great War.

Detached phrases and even stanzas have sometimes been published in "war books": but they are scattered, as well as fractional. Moreover, they are often confused by unnecessary bowdlerization and the intermingling of songs composed by the author for the purposes of his narrative. It is believed that this is the first attempt to collect and publish the songs and parodies which the British soldier *invented*. Purely regimental ditties have been excluded. These

songs here set out were universally sung in the British Expeditionary Forces at one time or another: and every endeavour has been made, by consulting men of all ranks and branches of the service, to secure completeness and definition. It is estimated that eighty to ninety per cent. of the text of these songs has never been printed before, in whole or in part. Minor variations are not usually given; instead, that version is used which in the opinion of the editors is the most pointed. One or two songs, including *I Love My Girl*, have been entirely suppressed, as being merely lewd and not essentially *soldiers'* songs. They are the sort of thing loutish adolescents delight in, and can with some probability be dated as pre-War.

It was considered important to make the collection as nearly complete as possible because these are genuine "folk-songs", and as such they stand alone in the modern world. Nothing like them is found in civilian life. They come from the ranks, especially from the private soldiers without ambition to bear office or special responsibility. The very roughness of the metre, the assonances, the faulty rhyming and the occasional omission of a rhyme indicate their illiterate or semi-literate origin. They are the songs of homeless men, evoked by exceptional and distressing circumstances; the songs of an itinerant community, continually altering within itself under the incidence of death and mutilation.

Like the mediæval ballads they are anonymous, and even the method of their composition is unknown. Much speculation and a deal of scholarship has failed to prove how the ballads originated. One theory is that each of them was composed by an individual poet, now unknown; and that repetition by professional minstrels merely polished the text and altered a word here and there. Another theory holds that the ballads were community songs, in building which each person present would add a line or a stanza at

a time. The same inductions may be applied to these Soldiers' Songs and—although they are so recent—with as little hope of final proof. The only author to whom they can be attributed is, warrior or warriors unknown. Most units included at least one man with some literary experience; a small journalist, a writer of Christmas card verses or parish magazine poetry, or someone with a turn for personal abuse, who would produce, for the battalion or battery concert-party, jests and ditties about topics of the moment or outstanding personalities of the unit. Such songs as these correspond to the "family" jokes abhorred of visitors. They lack the universality of spirit and application which is an essential quality of the songs included in this collection. But they may be a clue to the origin of the true Army songs, many of which are parodies. The men who composed battalion songs, and other men satiric or jocular, but not able to compose a whole song, would often perceive an opportunity so to twist and rearrange a line of a popular concert or music-hall song as to travesty its sentiments or to satirize some aspect of the common lot. The wit, delighted with his inspiration, would shout it aloud, louder than his comrades singing the original words. If it was appreciated, it would be taken up generally, and other minds, expanding the idea, would improve the phrase and lengthen it into a complete version. That this is a likely origin for many of the songs may be seen from one or two aborted parodies. In 1917–18 there was current a "ragtime number," *The Black Eyed Susans*, and it became customary at one part of the refrain to sing instead of the proper couplet:

> The Orderly Sergeant knows I'm coming,
> I can hear him softly humming.

But there for some reason the afflatus ceased, and the parody was never completed. Similarly with *Colonel*

Bogey, probably the most frequently heard march-tune in the Army. Some bars of the refrain went very well to a certain coarse word which could be hurled against the Manchesters or any other regiment whose name would fit the metre. But the rest of the tune was too intricate and, although it was known, whistled and hummed everywhere, no further words were ever attached to it. The songs that were invented in melody as well as in words were either snatches of nonsense or satire, or else ballads telling a story—usually a bawdy one. These may be more probably ascribed each to a single author. But one and all they are now anonymous. Some were inherited from the professional Army of pre-1914: perhaps the only descendants of a long oral tradition reaching back to the press-gangs and prisons of the eighteenth century. The majority are War songs and became obsolete, mere souvenirs of departed comradeships and never-to-be-repeated adventures, the moment the War ended. It is as such unique memorials of a unique event that they are here collected.

They sprang into being at different periods of the War—*Mademoiselle from Armenteers*, for example, is a 1915 song, *I wore a Tunic* is *1917*—and thereafter almost all remained in constant use till the Armistice. No one has claimed to be the author of any one of them—perhaps because the author is dead, or did not realize his feat, or forgot it in the scurry of other events, or is afraid of the outbreak of incredulity which such a claim would certainly now arouse. And it would be difficult to the point of impossibility to establish a date when any one of these songs was sung by one battalion, battery, brigade or division and unknown to the rest of the B.E.F. This rapid and thorough propagation was due to the intermingling of men from different units in billets and estaminets behind the line, and even more in hospitals, base-camps and

troopships. In addition, after 1916 the system of restoring an invalided man to his own battalion or battery broke down; "Base Details" were sent up the line to those formations which most needed reinforcements. A man who enlisted in the Devons might, after being wounded or sick, find himself in the Border Regiment or the Northumberland Fusiliers; and, after another wound, in a nominally Lancashire battalion composed of former Munsters, Scots Fusiliers, Middlesex, Norfolks and in fact every regiment in the Army.

Most of the songs fall readily enough into some one of eight categories.

1. *Satire on War, and Mock-Heroics.* Plain-speaking about war, the cold eye and the literal tongue turned upon what lies beyond the flag-waving and speech-making, the deliberate lowering of exalted spirits—this sort of realism is often supposed to be the discovery of the 1914–18 soldier. The warriors of previous ages are understood to have conducted themselves romantically (if brutally), as the conditions of their warfare allowed. Seemingly, they believed the patriotic songs, and were slaughtered in very pretty attitudes, decorating the background effectively for their more fortunate comrades who survived with no more than a few romantic rents in the scarlet tunic or a becoming bandage round the head. Thus the witness of Clio. The disillusionment, the bitterness, the grousing of the soldiers of the past is not on record, and we are to believe (as they themselves perhaps believed, once the danger and the fatigue were over) that the martial spirit then took no account of lice or the smell of corruption. It is hardly probable; and, as C. E. Montague pointed out, the stubborn, strictly agnostic spirit which ruled in the dangerous places of 1914–18 is to be found in Shakespeare's three-hundred-year-old *Henry V*, in the foot soldier Williams. Even a Great War cannot transform national character: it can but expose the foundations, the conflicting

stresses and inertias on which it is built. If Englishmen a decade ago were jesting about the death that slew their comrades and seemed their own certain fate, if they cheated hysteria with songs making fun of mud and lice and fear and weariness, it was because their forefathers had evolved the same ironic method of outwitting misfortune. When the victims can cheek Juggernaut even as they writhe under the wheels, then by so much do they subtract from his victory. That a man should have sung *Hush! Here comes a Whizz-Bang* or the second stanza of *If the Sergeant Steals Your Rum* did not in the least alter or diminish the incidence of the shells that burst about him in a bombardment. But the very knowledge of such songs reduced the emotional disorganization caused by fear, and aided him, after the experience, to pick his uncertain way back to sanity. Similarly, when the romantic conception of war proved false, out of date, useless, the soldier was helped in his dour, relentless task if he could make a mock of all heroics and sing, with apparent shamelessness, *I Don't Want to Die, I Don't Want to be a Soldier* or *Far Far From Ypres I long to Be.* For these songs satirised more than war: they poked fun at the soldier's own desire for peace and rest, and so prevented it getting the better of him. They were strong bulwarks against *défaitisme.*

2. *Satire on the Military System.* The greater part of Army organization is (or seemed to a private soldier during the War to be) devised for ceremonial purposes. Polishing brass buttons, presenting arms, adjusting alignment on the parade ground, saluting officers with the hand further away, and keeping one's thumbs in line with the seam of the trousers (without either looking at it or feeling for it!)—all this appeared somewhat irrelevant to the main purpose of winning the War. The men were assured that punctiliousness in such trifles had the most miraculous moral effect,

and in some unspecified manner would produce efficient soldiers. As soldiering was a new science to them, they were compelled to believe the professors, until their own experience let in a great flood of naked light and the old colonels and majors were seen to be maunderers speaking from the book, blind to reality. But by that time it was too late. Military discipline is so hieratic and rigid that it can be altered only by revolution—and a revolution would have meant defeat. The British soldier continued to suffer the absurdities and irritations of a system designed a century or more ago to transform tramps and wastrels into pretty puppets. He did not suffer in silence. His comments, in private and occasionally *sotto voce* on parade, were incisive and impolite. But the very discipline against which he rebelled kept his opinions out of his songs. Faint ghosts of his thoughts and feelings about the handling of the New Armies may be heard twittering in *We Are Fred Karno's Army* and *At the Halt on the Left Form Platoon.*

3. *Satire on Superior Officers.* The soldier's resentment against the system to which he was subjected often took the form of jeers at a particular person in authority over him, who seemed to typify the general stupidity, or was notoriously inefficient or domineering. Certain ranks and offices were, by their own nature, a target for satire: chiefly colonels, sergeant-majors, quartermaster-sergeants and sergeants. The colonel figures in songs of this kind because he was the supreme authority the private soldier knew, and because, sometimes, he took excessive care of his ageing skin. But officers generally escaped satire: not that the private failed to recognize that they had a much more comfortable time than he, but because they belonged to a race apart. As for staff officers—when the private soldier thought about them (justly or not), even his well-stocked invective failed. He merely had dark and dangerous emotions. But the sergeant, the

sergeant-major and the quartermaster-sergeant were close at hand; and all the rant and bluster in the world failed to conceal a single defect. With the Colonel they are the comic villains of *The Old Barbed Wire*; while the C.S.M. had one song all to himself—*The Sergeant-Major's Having a Time*, and the platoon sergeant two—*We Haven't Seen the Sergeant*, and that magnificent commination entitled in these pages, *Greeting to the Sergeant.*

4. *Panegyrics of Civilian Bliss, Past and Present.* Present experience always subordinates what is distant in time or space. Yesterday is never real as to-day is, and if we stand in Oxford Street the most vivid imagination in the world will not bring Whitehall before our eyes in any comparable fashion. The very fact that men became soldiers, enrolled themselves in a masculine community and were bandied about northern Europe, and the least attractive quarters of Africa and Asia, inevitably made their own civilian past and the normal civilian routine of England (which the newspapers and letters showed to be continuing) seem unreal. Siegfried Sassoon speaks of soldiers:

> "Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
> And mocked by hopeless longing to regain
> Bank-holidays, and picture-shows, and spats,
> And going to the office in the train."

The poem is appropriately called *Dreamers*, for to the soldier civilian life appeared only in the disproportionate and deliciously fantastic quality of a dream. The life imposed on a man by the War was so unnatural, and at the same time such a complete conquest of body and mind, that his pre-soldiering past became as incredible as the possibility of an undisturbed and liberated future. War was so abominable that the most ordinary details of normal life were longed for more intensely than saints on earth have desired the

benefits of their paradise. *I Want to Go Home*, the soldier sang, mockingly perhaps, but without pretences. That was what he wanted most of all, though some more obscure aspiration fixed him in his trench till certain conditions were fulfilled. And he kept the hard-flogged flesh going with ribald promises, listed in *When This Blasted War is Over*. There was little envy of civilians avoiding the perils and discomforts of war. The soldier had his opinions and stated them bluntly. After that, the matter was done with. *I Wore a Tunic* stands alone, and it had but a "limited run."

5. *Celebration of Drink and other Comforts*. Even teetotallers will join boisterously in the chorus of a good drinking song, and it must not be inferred from *Here's to the Good Old Beer* and *Glorious!* that it was an army of drunkards which won the War. Remarkably few soldiers were reduced to bestiality by their experience, but all felt a renewed zest in animal pleasures—among which the quenching of thirst and the warming of chilled bodies rank high. Hence the celebration of beer and rum.

6. *Nonsense and Burlesque*. There is a long English tradition of nonsense, and such refrains as *Inky-Pinky Parley-Vous* and *Skibboo* are in the direct line from the Elizabethan *Hey Nonny Nonny Noes*. They are no more than pleasant sounds invented to fit a tripping tune. The English mind, never coldly logical and often suspicious of highfalutin sentiments, takes an especial delight in inconsequent stories and snatches, and in burlesque. *Down by the Sea* and *Wash Me in the Water* are choice examples of irrational fooling: examine them and there is no content at all, but sing them in good company and they satisfy some deep, unsuspected thirst of the spirit. And for burlesque, literature has produced little better than *She was Poor But She was Honest* and *I Have No Pain, Dear Mother, Now*.

7. *Sex Ribaldry.* The irresponsible and coarse view of sex, as a mere source of pleasure and amusement, flourishes wherever men congregate. It springs, probably, from the physical nature of the male in conflict with his mind and spirit, which are generally in the ascendant but cannot prevent the flesh having a fling and making a song about it now and again. Men bear within their bodies nothing like the womb to remind them perpetually of the responsibility and godliness of sex. With them the body's influence on the mind is all turbulence and distraction. Living a grossly physical life, under acute nervous stresses, and scarcely seeing a woman even in the distance, the soldier found his natural male ribaldry immensely encouraged. He sang bawdily. The nature and significance of such songs as *My Nelly*, *Skibboo*, and the world-celebrated *Mademoiselle from Armenteers* will be discussed later, in a general investigation of soldiers' obscenity. Here it will be sufficient to urge that deductions should be drawn from these songs with the greatest reserve. Many men refused to sing them in their bawdiest versions. And always it must be remembered that the English pay little attention to the meaning of words, and rarely use them with any precision. This is especially noticeable in the words of songs; in England a good tune will excuse almost anything. Hence the recent popularity of the brutal *Beggar's Opera*; hence the spectacle of sober British matrons and innocent virgins singing *risqué* songs in their respectable drawing-rooms; hence the straight faces with which Anglican congregations work their way through the many ludicrous pages of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

8. *Sentimental and Pathetic Songs.* Of these there are very few examples, and one is doubtful. *Rolling Home* has most of its sentiment and charm in the tune. Another, *The Old Barbed Wire*, is pathetic only in the last stanza, which is remarkable as almost the sole

indication in song that the soldier was aware of his own dark fate. *Good-bye Nellie* alone is out-and-out sentiment, but it is thoroughly typical of the slow, heavy melancholy of the soldier's sadder moods. No one who was ever present at the departure of a leave train could doubt the soldier's capacity for sentiment; he invented few songs to fit this recurring mood, partly because he was shy of it, partly because he was so well supplied by the music-halls with tearful ballads of parting and regret and unrequited love.

As for why the soldier sang, while the civilian was, and is, content to listen to others singing, the prime cause may be set down as physical elation. Men with healthy bodies want to sing to express the joy of their health. A clerk or a mechanic, though he may be trained to athletic fitness, gets few opportunities of singing at his work; the most he may do is to hum under his breath. Even in music-halls the audience is no longer requested to "join in the chorus—altogether please!" So when the civilian turned soldier in 1914 and found his body pleasurably hardened, perhaps for the first time since his boyhood, it was natural for him to sing on the march and in the huts and tents of his camp. As the War went on, other circumstances contributed, and some of them modified considerably the nature of his singing. A route march of any distance quickly became unbearably monotonous: a band added to the vitality and endurance of every man. And with or without a band, singing was inevitable. It helped along. A different sort of song, comparable to the sailor's chanty, was selected for fatigues, especially the unloading of lorries and trains and the stacking of stores. Long carrying fatigues went without musical honours, except now and again a derisive snatch—spirits were too low, and breath too scant. But in the trenches a tune, especially on a mouth-organ, would scare away fear itself, as well as the slow-settling bogey of depres-

sion. Some men had an inborn genius, chivalrously cultivated, for cheering their companions with song. Defiance and light-heartedness bubbled in their voices. But need it be said, at this date, that no one chirruped under a bombardment or in the open exposed to machine-gun and rifle fire? The soldier sang not only to express the joy of well-being or to conjure himself out of the dumps; but to express in an indirect and impersonal fashion, affording good protection for his shamefacedness, his sentiment, especially his sentiment about his home and about his wife or girl. It was only the modern English terror of emotion which prevented him from making up his own songs on these themes. Again, the soldier lived in enforced celibacy, and saw no women for months on end. He lived unnaturally under great physical and nervous strains, and his sexual desire became morbid, dammed, stagnant and turbulent by turns. A minority vented it in physical promiscuity; but its violence shows chiefly in the bawdiness of some of these universal songs, and in the sentimentality of the professionally composed *If You were the Only Girl in the World*, *Nellie Dean*, *No Rose in All the World*, and their kind. And as his experience grew and he "found out" the Army and the War, the soldier sang satirically and bitterly to revenge himself upon the system which held him prisoner and used him irrationally; as well as upon the war madness to which, in order ultimately to defeat it, he had to sacrifice himself. Finally, the soldier sang for amusement. His own and his comrades' lilting voices were to him what the theatre, the twice-nightly local Empire or Hippodrome, the concert-hall and the cinema had been in civilian life.

Contrary to a common supposition, only a small proportion of these songs are improper in subject or in language. In this way they differ from the normal conversation of soldiers amongst themselves, which

was technically obscene in almost every sentence. The obscenity was merely technical because, although gross and foul words were employed, they were used habitually, almost mechanically, as mere intensives. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred there was no thought in the soldier's mind of the literal and obscene meaning of the word upon his lips. In the same way he called on the names of God and Christ blasphemously, but without the slightest intention of blasphemy.

There are three very ugly words around which almost all Army obscenity revolved. Two of them were used literally in that "smutty" sensual talk which seems to satisfy a demand in the nature of most men, a demand enormously strengthened by the excitement, the emotionalism, the danger of war, and the enforced absence of women's society. All three words are ugly, in form and in sound. They are sexual but utterly unvoluptuous. Their use will coarsen and degrade, but it will not soften or seduce. As will be shown, they are words of which the primary function is cursing, the expression of cruel and debased emotions. They are impossible for literature, because, used however carefully and literally, they still carry, in their sound and in their appearance, the filthiness of their past. They are unshriven and, seemingly, past redemption. James Joyce in *Ulysses* uses them for their authentic and historic purpose—cursing. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* D. H. Lawrence experimented with two of them; he used the words quite simply and literally for a natural function and for a part of the body, and employed the full force of his genius, at its highest period of development, to make them aesthetically satisfying. The experiment was a failure: the two words instead of interweaving with the texture of his prose, rear their unlovely heads out of the page, gibbering abominably. A completely innocent and childlike mind

might read the book without differentiating these words. But even this is doubtful; they look ugly, their vocalization is uncouth; so far from being onomatopœic, the sound of them belies and profanes their meaning. And for normal people who have been unable to avoid some experience of the degradations of the human spirit, these words can never be innocent again. Lawrence might have realized, before he began it, that his experiment was in vain. But the primary fault is not his: it is the deficiency of English language, perhaps of the English people. For in all the *New English Dictionary* there are no sane, clean words for the physical processes of sex, only scientific terms, euphemisms, and these curse words.

It is often said that the War brought about a great slackening of the inhibitions of speech. It is true; but there was more to it than that. War did not merely let loose formerly restrained ideas and feelings; by its own degrading and brutalizing effects, and by contagion with minds already corrupt, it implanted many that had never been there before. Most men who served in the Army were coarsened in thought and speech; in many the process was swift, violent, obtrusive. The agents of this corruption of the mind were these three obscene words, uttered in every other sentence when soldiers spoke amongst themselves. It may be enlightening to examine their nature.

The first was the commonest: so common indeed in its adjectival form that after a short time the ear refused to acknowledge it and took in only the noun to which it was attached. Dean Inge recently remarked of *bloody* as used by working men that it means nothing, it is simply a warning that a noun is coming. So with the soldier's use of this sexual word. From being an intensive to express strong emotion it became a merely conventional

excrescence. By adding -ing and -ingwell, an adjective and an adverb were formed and thrown into every sentence. It became so common that an effective way for the soldier to express emotion was to omit this word. Thus if a sergeant said, "Get your ——ing rifles!" it was understood as a matter of routine. But if he said, "Get your rifles!" there was an immediate implication of urgency and danger. The adjectival form was the commonest, but the root word is a verb meaning to copulate. It is a monosyllable from the Latin through the French, but use has degraded its form till it seems the most uncouth Saxon. It is probably the most repulsive word in the language, and is known all over the world as the English curse *par excellence*. Street urchins will spit it at you in Cairo, Bombay, Cape Town, Shanghai and probably in Labrador and Paraguay as well.

The second word is a monosyllable also, and equally hideous in form and sound. It was sometimes developed into an adjective by the addition of -ing, but generally remained a noun, and was used for any person or thing under dislike. It is found in Middle English, from the Greek through the Latin; and again foul usage has made its form harsh and uncouth. It is a name for a female genital organ.

The third word stands rather apart. It is a dissyllable and, while with the first two there probably remained some faint unconscious recognition of the literal meaning, this was used quite apart from it. The word actually means a sexually perverted man or his actions; but in cursing it was simply any person or thing disliked, and especially any unfavourable operation of circumstance. The filthiest in origin of all three words, this, in practice, was the least offensive. But again, though it comes from the Latin through the French, it has been Saxonized in form.

The sexual origin of all three words, taken in con-

junction with their ugliness of form and their function as curses, is the clue to the nature of Army obscenity. It was a vent for the nervous exasperation set up by the unnatural strains of modern warfare. Only a minority of the men were barbarous enough to kill and to see men killed without revulsion and spiritual disorganization. But even this was not the greatest strain. In previous wars a man matched himself against other men; between 1914 and 1918 he had to endure with his nerves the inhuman and superhuman brutality of explosive machines. Shell fire is often not nearly so lethal as machine-gunning; but it batters the mind to a pulp of insanity, from which every return is slower and less certain. Though modern warfare is more impersonal than the chivalrous style, it is even more sadistic. Its efficiency is the wholesale infliction of death and suffering, and the good soldier must strive after efficiency. Decent men cloaked the nature of war on every possible occasion with their own, quite irrelevant, sentiment and kindliness. But they recognized the truth in their cursing. They chose obscene words whose sadism matched the sadism of war. The very ugliness satisfied because war—hated consciously or subconsciously—was ugly. The obscenity satisfied, because the words blasphemed sex, even as war blasphemed life which is the child of sex. Of course the words existed before the War. Every human spirit is as capable of degradation as of exaltation, and pimps and sots have always had their own vocabulary. In any general use, however, these words are probably a product of our modern urban civilization. They come from the stews of cities; vents for the exasperation of the slum-born and slum-bred. Often they are described as the language of the natural man; in fact, they are the refuge of the *un*natural man, of the unfortunates overstrained by poverty or war, and of the poor creatures who cannot make a job of marriage but must stimulate their jaded desire with

secret harlotries and mindless shows of dancing girls. The man to whom circumstance allows some cleanliness, peace and order, and who centres his life on his wife and children, has no need of these curse words and despises them.

The other terms in these songs which are technically improper, are entirely different in kind. They are chiefly names for parts of the male body and the excrementary functions; coarse, but neither blasphemous nor sadistic. Convention at present debars them from polite conversation, but there would be no corruption of morals if they were admitted.

If war certainly coarsens and perhaps debases the mind, if it is both sadistic and futile, the question may well be put: Why make a collection of songs which in part reflect the nature of war? It cannot be answered by the argument that all experience is valuable and worthy of record. Not merely art but any decent conduct of the individual life proceeds by selection—and that implies rejection. But the War created a cosmos of its own, almost as crowded, and more confused, more vehement, than the normal organization of European life. And it is not possible to separate the experiences of war into the wholly good and the wholly bad. This is seen in the attitude of many men who have no reason to tolerate war, and yet feel and admit that their participation was valuable to them. War enriched their spiritual and mental existence. The recession of time now permits us to see that the qualities of experience which soldiers *enjoyed*, in both the Aristotelian and the everyday sense of the word, were precisely what is not essential to war. An incomplete list will serve as a rough guide. This is what the soldier found good in the War: the simplification of his life, open air, the hard use of his body, the sense of a tangible, immediate and valuable task, the sense of being a member of a vast society organized to an ethical end, comradeship, uncertainty of the

morrow, the possibility of adventure and an enhanced awareness of the mystery and precariousness of life. What belongs properly to war—injustice, cruelty, maiming, the blasphemous undervaluation of life—was abhorred by the ordinary soldier. On him the bloody burden of war fell, but he will not deny his own happy memories of so much that was, sentimentally and casually, interwoven with the beastliness. He will not repudiate war until this industrial civilization of ours is remade and reorganized to give him the health, the adventure, the comradeships and the valuable task which war afforded. When a man says of 1914–18, "Ah, things happened then!" he is uttering a complete, if implicit, condemnation of our civilian world. We are in a bad way if we are compelled to slaughter in millions in order to discover the excitement and the richness of life. But *the* War was certainly the last epical war—for epics are adventures of the human spirit. 1914–18 saw the repulse by the European spirit of its own creation—lethal engines. The next war will be a war between such engines—physical and chemical—unless the spirit learns commonsense, and turns to higher and unbloody adventures. Certainly, 1914–18 was unique, as these songs are unique. They will never be repeated. They perish, except as monuments, with our memories and with the bodies of all those brown good-natured men who marched to and from their training camps whistling gay tunes and silly snatches. Ten to one that is what your old soldier is thinking of when he tells you "the War was not so bad"; his inward eye is filled with the memory of one of the loveliest sights in the world, an infantry battalion in column of route upon a summer day, with the rhythm of the march constant in every swinging limb; and his inward ear is listening again to the spirit of 1914–15, a thousand men, dead now or irrevocably changed, singing *Here We Are Again*, innocent of the Somme, Arras, Messines, Passchendaele,

Ypres, Cambrai, and all their calamitous fate, then undisclosed and unsuspected. For one generation, at least, that innocence will not return, but will never be forgotten.

SONGS

I. SONGS
PREDOMINANTLY SUNG ON THE MARCH

SONGS

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Après la Guerre

Air: "Sous les Ponts de Paris"

Après la guerre finie,
Soldat anglais parti;
Mam'selle Fransay boko pleuray
Après la guerre finie.

Après la guerre finie,
Soldat anglais parti;
Mademoiselle in the family way,
Après la guerre finie.

Après la guerre finie,
Soldat anglais parti;
Mademoiselle in the family way:
Boko pic-a-nin-ee.

Variation:
Mademoiselle can go to hell
Après la guerre finie.

Note.—Brutal and cynical: a traditional masculine jest. But it is not to be inferred that more than one or two men in a thousand of the millions who sang this song attempted to carry its implications into practice. The tune was delightful and gay; the words went without much thought.

Fred Karno's Army

Air: "The Church's One Foundation"

We are Fred Karno's army,
The ragtime infantry:
We cannot fight, we cannot shoot,
What earthly use are we!
And when we get to Berlin,
The Kaiser he will say,
"Hoch, hoch! Mein Gott,
What a bloody fine lot
Are the ragtime infantry!"

This varied in a few details from unit to unit. Australians and New Zealanders, for example, sang "A.N.Z.A.C." for "ragtime infantry", and "rotten lot" was often substituted for the sarcastic "fine lot", in the penultimate line. Fred Karno was a popular comedian whose performance, "The Mumming Birds", was a crescendo of imbecility and absurd incompetence. It was a sketch in which several minor comedians appeared, among them, at one time, Charlie Chaplin and the late Harry Weldon—both of whom continued and made famous the pathetic-comic tradition of ineffectiveness.

We've Had No Beer

Air: "Lead, Kindly Light."

We've had no beer,
We've had no beer to-day,
We've had no beer!
We've had no beer,
No beer at all to-day,
We've had no beer,
We've had no beer to-day!

Note.—This was sung lugubriously and low, usually at the end of a long route march. With a variation, *We've had no duff*, it belong properly to the period of training in England. But the song is so simple in structure that innumerable variations could be made to suit the occasion. Really indignant battalions would go through the whole range of monosyllabic drinks, stanza by stanza, adding to the list of deficiencies *stout*, *gin*, *ale*, *wine*, *port*, etc. In France the song was usually forgotten except when an expected issue of rum failed; then, if the men's feelings were not too bitter and circumstances not too depressing, the mock melancholy chant would be heard, *We've had no rum to-day!*

At the Halt on the Left

Air: "Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue."

At the halt on the left, form platoon!
At the halt on the left, form platoon!
If the odd numbers don't mark time two paces,
How the hell can the rest form platoon?

Note.—This little parody was popularised early in 1914. It conveys with some precision the querulous tone as well as the drill-book phraseology of an exasperated officer or N.C.O. endeavouring to teach this complicated evolution. To form platoon a column of men four abreast must first adjust itself into a column two abreast. The alternate men—the "odd numbers"—had to mark time, i.e. lift their feet without moving forward, while the others, the "even numbers," slipped into place beside them. Then the whole platoon turned and began to swing round into line.

This was a pre-War Regular Army and Territorial song, to which the years 1914–1918 gave a flavour of their own.

Yes! And We Can Do It!

Air: Nursery Game Melody

Breaking out of barracks!
Breaking out of barracks!
Breaking out of barracks!
As you have done before.

Parading all unbuttoned!
Parading all unbuttoned!
Parading all unbuttoned!
As you have done before.

Take his name and number!
Take his name and number!
Take his name and number!
As you have done before.

Up before the C.O.!
Up before the C.O.!
Up before the C.O.!
As you have done before.

Fourteen days detention!
Fourteen days detention!
Fourteen days detention!
As you have done before.

Pack-drill, bread and water!
Pack-drill, bread and water!
Pack-drill, bread and water!
As you have done before.

Yes, and we can do it!
Yes, and we can do it!
Yes, and we can do it!
As we have done before.

NOTE.—To appear on parade with a button unfastened was to be "naked"—a punishable offence. The officer who detected the offence could—and often did—order an N.C.O. to "take his name and number," i.e. to make a note in his notebook of the man's regimental number and name. Trial and punishment followed the next day.

Perhaps we may suitably mention here that we have omitted what an eminent critic aptly describes as "the old cumulative marching songs." These were, in origin and in practice until the War, folk-songs without any reference to things military. The best known examples are *One Man Went to Mow* and the better *Old King Cole* in its parodied form.

Space allows us to mention *Sammy Hall*, a very old civilian song early adopted by the Army. Charles Whitby says that this is the song sung by Captain Costigan in the "Cave of Harmony" at the beginning of Thackeray's *Newcomes*. Originally it was a scoundrel's funeral oration, *Sam Hall*, or *the Body Snatcher*, but its military popularity caused it often to be known as *Captain Hall*. Each verse ended with

So good-bye, and damn you all,
Damn your eyes.

Several of our correspondents assert—and we have no reason to disbelieve them—that it was frequently sung in 1914 and the earlier half of 1915. We had at first omitted all mention of this song, for neither of us ever heard it sung in 1914–1918.

She Married a Man

Air: ?

The squire had a daughter, so fair and so tall,
She lived in her satins and silks at the hall,
But she married a man who had no ——s at all.
No ——s at all,
No ——s at all,
She married a man who had no ——s at all.

Note.—Almost certainly a pre-War folk-song turned to Army use and profit. The verse tune is faintly reminiscent of *Bonnie Dundee*, but the chorus has a swing all its own. The version here given is concise. There is, however, another, with three stanzas of four verses each, and with the same chorus as in our version. But the longer version, though it has great merits, is too obscene for us to attempt to give it.

Tiddleywinks, Old Man

Air: Hornpipe

TIDDLEYWINKS, old man,
Find a woman if you can,
If you can't find a woman,
Do without, old man.
When the rock of Gibraltar
Takes a flying leap at Malta
You'll never find a woman in a bully-beef can.

NOTE.—We have, to avoid the rigours of the law, slightly euphemised three lines.

We're Here Because

Air: "Auld Lang Syne"

WE'RE here
Because
We're here
Because
We're here
Because we're here.

NOTE.—Sung with great gusto because—ninety-nine times out of a hundred—the men who sang it had no idea why they were there, or where "there" was, or how long they would continue at it.

A similar song was *King Charles he was King Charles*, which consists of just that one line, or, as some prefer it, just two lines, repeated till the singers wearied of it; in origin it was pre-War Regular Army.

Down by the Sea

Air: ?

Down by the sea
(Down by the sea!)
Where the water-melons grow
(Where the water-melons grow!)
Back to my home
(Back to my home!)
I dare not go
(I dare not go!)
For if I do
(For if I do!)
My wife will say:
(My wife will say!)
"Have you ever seen a cow with a green eye-brow,
Down where the water-melons grow?"

N.B.—The repetitive lines were intoned very softly, and the whole piece of nonsense was sung slow and sweet, till the last two lines, which went with speed and gusto. Although most soldiers did not realize it, this was almost certainly a pre-War American ditty.

John Brown's Baby

Air: "John Brown's Body"

John Brown's baby's got a pimple on his—shush!
John Brown's baby's got a pimple on his—shush!
John Brown's baby's got a pimple on his—shush!
The poor kid can't sit down.

Note.—A pre-War parody adopted whole-heartedly by the soldiers, and by them granted a new and much more vigorous lease of life.

She Was So Good

Air: ?

She was so good and so kind to me,
Just like one of the family,
I shall never forget
The first time we met,
She was—
She was—
She——
was so good and so kind to me, etc., etc. (and so on interminably, or as long as patience lasts).

Note.—Almost certainly, in pre-War days, a folk-recitative.

Barney

Air: ?

I took my girl
For a ramble, a ramble,
Adown a shady lane.
She caught her foot
In a bramble, a bramble,
And —— over —— she came.

Oh, Barney,
Oh, Barney!
Oh, bring back my Barney to me-ee-ee.
Oh, Barney,
Oh Barney!
Oh, bring back my Barney to me.

Variation:

Oh, Sergeant,
Oh, Sergeant,
Oh, bring back my rations to me.

Note.—It has been suggested that "Barney" was originally "Bonnie", and this would certainly lend consecutiveness to this choice piece of nonsense, which was sung to a most tender and plaintive melody.

As for the chorus, it is really the variation which confirms this as an authentic soldiers' song, for the original form of this chorus is a well-known air found in many community-song books: *Bring back my Bonnie to Me;* see, e.g., the old *Scottish Students' Song Book.*

The Moon Shines Bright

Air: "Pretty Red Wing." (Sentimental ballad: pre-War)

The moon shines bright on Charlie Chaplin,
His boots are cracking
For want of blacking,
And his khaki trousers
They want mending,
Before we send him
To the Dardanelles.

Rolling Home

Air: ?

Rolling home,
Rolling home,
Rolling home,
Rolling home,
By the light of the silvery moo-oo-oon!
Happy is the day
When you draw your buckshee pay
And you're rolling, rolling, rolling, rolling home.

Note.—In spite of the implications of alcoholic revelry, this charming air was often sung quietly and with much sentiment. In the evening or towards the close of the afternoon, the words would sometimes be omitted and the air whistled and hummed. A pre-War song adapted to Army needs.

Here's to the Good Old Beer

Air: ?

Here's to the good old beer—
Mop it down, mop it down!
Here's to the good old beer—
Mop it down!
Here's to the good old beer,
That never leaves you queer,
Here's to the good old beer—
Mop it down!

Here's to the good old whisky—
Mop it down, mop it down!
Here's to the good old whisky—
Mop it down!
Here's to the good old whisky,
That makes you feel so frisky,
Here's to the good old whisky—
Mop it down!

Here's to the good old porter—
Mop it down, mop it down!
Here's to the good old porter—
Mop it down!
Here's to the good old porter,
That slips down as it oughter,
Here's to the good old porter—
Mop it down!

Here's to the good old brandy—
Mop it down, mop it down!
Here's to the good old brandy—
Mop it down!
Here's to the good old brandy,
That makes you feel so randy,
Here's to the good old brandy—
Mop it down!

Here's to the good old stout—
Mop it down, mop it down!
Here's to the good old stout—
Mop it down!
Here's to the good old stout,
That makes you feel blown-out,
Here's to the good old stout,
Mop it down.

Here's to the good old rum—
Mop it down, mop it down!
Here's to the good old rum—
Mop it down!
Here's to the good old rum,
That warms your ——s and bum,
Here's to the good old rum,
Mop it down.

Here's to the good old port—
Mop it down, mop it down!
Here's to the good old port—
Mop it down!
Here's to the good old port,
That makes you feel a sport,
Here's to the good old port—
Mop it down!

Here's to the good old gin—
Mop it down, mop it down!
Here's to the good old gin—
Mop it down!
Here's to the good old gin,
That fills you up with sin,
Here's to the good old gin—
Mop it down!

NOTE.—A pre-War community song that the soldiers made their own. There was also a stanza which ran:

"Here's to the good old sherry . . .
That makes you feel so merry . . ."

I have no Pain, Dear Mother, Now

Air: "My Love is like a Red, Red Rose"

I HAVE no pain, dear mother, now,
But oh! I am so dry.
Connect me to a brewery
And leave me there to die.

NOTE.—This tune is the regimental march of the Loyal North Lancashires, but to these words was known throughout the Army.

The Old Black Bull

Air: A traditional Somerset tune

The old black bull came down from the mountain,
Euston, Dan Euston.
The old black bull came down from the mountain
A long time ago.

Chorus:
A long time ago,
A long time ago
The old black bull came down from the mountain
A long time ago.

There were six fine heifers in the pasture grazing,
Euston, Dan Euston.
There were six fine heifers in the pasture grazing,
A long time ago.

Chorus:
A long time ago, etc.

And he pawed on the ground and he —— in the fountain,
Euston, Dan Euston, etc.

Chorus:
A long time ago, etc.

Now the old black bull's gone back to the mountain,
Euston, Dan Euston, etc.

Chorus:
A long time ago, etc.

And his head hung low and his back was broken,
Euston, Dan Euston, etc.

Chorus:
A long time ago, etc.

Note.—Sung especially in "Mespot." Pre-War, when local to Somerset.

What Did You Join the Army For?

Air: "Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen"

WHAT did you join the Army for?
Why did you join the Army?
What did you join the Army for?
You must have been bloodywell barmy.

NOTE.—This tune is the regimental march of the King's (Liverpool) Regiment, with whose Regular battalions it may have originated.

Raining

Air: "Holy, Holy, Holy." (Hymn Tune.)

RAINING, raining, raining,
Always bloodywell raining.
Raining all the morning,
And raining all the night.

Grousing, grousing, grousing,
Always bloodywell grousing.
Grousing at the rations,
And grousing at the pay.

Marching, marching, marching,
Always bloodywell marching,
Marching in the morning,
And marching in the night.

Marching, marching, marching,
Always bloodywell marching;
When the war is over
We'll bloodywell march no more.

They were only Playing Leap-Frog

Air: "John Brown's Body"

THEY were only playing leap-frog,
They were only playing leap-frog,
They were only playing leap-frog,
(*Prestissimo*) When one grasshopper jumped right over
the other grasshopper's back.

Oh, it's a lie, Oh, it's a lie,
Oh, it's a lie, Oh, it's a lie,
For you know, you blighter, you're
telling a lie,
You know you're telling a lie.

They were only playing leap-frog,
They were only playing leap-frog,
They were only playing leap-frog,
(*Prestissimo*) When one staff-officer jumped right over
the other staff-officer's back.

Oh, it's a lie, etc.

We were only drawing water,
We were only drawing water,
We were only drawing water,
(*Prestissimo*) When the sergeant-major came and stole
the handle off the pump.

Oh, it's a lie, etc.

NOTE.—A pre-War University parody parodied by the Army.

We Haven't Seen the Sergeant

Air: "He's a Cousin of Mine." (Music-hall song: War period)

We haven't seen the sergeant for a hell of a time,
A hell of a time, a hell of a time.
He came up to see what we were doin';
Number Eight Platoon will be his bloody ruin.
Oh, we haven't seen the sergeant for a hell of a time,
Perhaps he's gone up with a mine.
He's a sergeant in the Rifle Brigade,
Well, strafe him, he's no cousin of mine.

Note.—Compare these sentiments with *Greeting to the Sergeant* (page 86). For "Rifle Brigade", of course, substitute the name of any other regiment, at will.

I Wore a Tunic

Air: "I wore a Tulip." (Sentimental ballad: War-time)

I WORE a tunic,
A dirty khaki-tunic,
And you wore civilian clothes.
We fought and bled at Loos
While you were on the booze,
The booze that no one here knows.
Oh, you were with the wenches
While we were in the trenches
Facing our German foe.
Oh, you were a-slacking
While we were attacking
Down on the Menin Road.

NOTE.—A late-in-the-War song, popular for a short time when men who had been on leave or in hospital had seen the prosperity of many munition makers. It is, however, almost the only song which displays any resentment against able-bodied civilians. Note the very rough approximations that serve for rhymes—clothes, knows; foe, road—due to the slovenly pronunciation of the working classes.

Mademoiselle from Armenteers

Air: French Music-Hall Tune

Mademoiselle from Armenteers,
Parley-vous!
Mademoiselle from Armenteers,
Parley-vous!
Mademoiselle from Armenteers,
She hasn't been —— for forty years,
Inky-pinky parley-vous.

Note.—In popular opinion, this song is almost endless, but popular opinion has lumped together *Mademoiselle* with the three songs that immediately follow this. There are, however, several differing and vague collections of verses with the poor woman described as experiencing many vulgar mishaps, but we do not propose to print them here.

Madame, Have You . . . ?

Air: "Mademoiselle from Armenteers"

MADAME, have you any good wine?
Parley-vous!
Madame, have you any good wine?
Parley-vous!
Madame, have you any good wine
Fit for a soldier of the line?
Inky-pinky parley-vous?

Oh, yes, I have some very good wine,
Parley-vous!
Oh, yes, I have some very good wine,
Parley-vous!
Oh, yes, I have some very good wine
Fit for a soldier of the line,
Inky-pinky parley-vous!

Madame, have you a daughter fine?
Parley-vous!
Madame, have you a daughter fine?
Parley-vous!
Madame, have you a daughter fine
Fit for a soldier of the line,
Inky-pinky parley-vous?

Oh, yes, I have a daughter fine,
Parley-vous!
Oh, yes, I have a daughter fine,
Parley-vous!
Oh, yes, I have a daughter fine
Far too good for a bloke from the line,
Inky-pinky parley-vous!

The Sergeant-Major's having a Time

Air: "Mademoiselle from Armenteers"

THE Sergeant-Major's having a time
Parley-vous!
The Sergeant-Major's having a time
Parley-vous!
The Sergeant-Major's having a time
Swinging the lead behind the line,
Inky-pinky parley-vous!

The Sergeant-Major's having a time
Parley-vous!
The Sergeant-Major's having a time
Parley-vous!
The Sergeant-Major's having a time
Swigging the beer behind the line,
Inky-pinky parley-vous!

The Sergeant-Major's having a time
Parley-vous!
The Sergeant-Major's having a time
Parley-vous!
The Sergeant-Major's having a time
Kissing the girls behind the line,
Inky-pinky parley-vous!

NOTE.—"Inky-pinky parley-vous" is actually an alteration of the refrain that, in the next song, we give as "Ski-bumpity-bump skibboo," which is earlier, just as the whole of *Skibboo* is earlier.

Skibboo

Air: Variation of "Mademoiselle from Armenteers"

A German officer crossed the Rhine,
Skibboo! Skibboo! } *bis*
A German officer crossed the Rhine,
He was on the look-out for women and wine.
Skibboo, skibboo
Ski-bumpity-bump skibboo!

Oh, landlord, have you a daughter fair!
Skibboo! Skibboo! } *bis*
Oh, landlord, have you a daughter fair,
With lily-white breasts and golden hair.
Skibboo, skibboo
Ski-bumpity-bump skibboo!

Oh, yes, I have a daughter fair!
Skibboo! Skibboo! } *bis*
Oh, yes, I have a daughter fair,
With lily-white breasts and golden hair.
Skibboo, skibboo
Ski-bumpity-bump skibboo!

But my fair daughter is far too young,
Skibboo! Skibboo! } *bis*
But my fair daughter is far too young
To be mucked about by a son of a gun.
Skibboo, skibboo,
Ski-bumpity-bump skibboo!

Oh father, oh father, I'm not too young,
Skibboo! Skibboo! } *bis*
Oh father, oh father, I'm not too young,
I've been to bed with the parson's son.
Skibboo, skibboo,
Ski-bumpity-bump skibboo!

It's a hell of a song that we've just sung.
Skibboo! Skibboo! } *bis*
It's a hell of a song that we've just sung
And the blighter that wrote it ought to be hung,
Skibboo, skibboo,
Ski-bumpity-bump skibboo!

Note.—We have slightly euphemised the refrain; a comparatively innocuous variant of the original was: "Skibboo-skiatica-hell-of-a-skittika-dam'-gor-blimey." Before the closing stanza are two so obscenely graphic as to leave us no option but to suppress them.

Skibboo may just possibly be the earliest part, the operative origin of the whole *Mademoiselle from Armenteers* group, for it was sung before the War; and it is, in essentials, a parody of Uhland's *The Landlady's Daughter*. But to show how intricate is the relationship of these four songs, we may mention that many old soldiers know a song entitled *Two German Officers*, which combines *Madame, Have You . . .* and *Skibboo*, and adds several stanzas—stanzas reading like a feeble gloss in our opinion. Moreover, there was a pre-War version entitled *Three German Officers*, which must date from before the Franco-Prussian War: this, in fact, is the version parodying Uhland, and it may even go back to the Waterloo campaign, when English soldiers came into close friendly contact with the Germans.

II

SONGS SUNG ON THE MARCH, BUT MORE OFTEN IN BILLETS AND ESTAMINETS

SONGS

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Wash Me in the Water

Air: Salvation Army Hymn Tune

Wash me in the water
That you washed your dirty daughter,
And I shall be whiter
Than the whitewash on the wall.
Whiter
Than the whitewash on the wall,
Whiter
Than the whitewash on the wall.
Oh, wash me in the water
That you washed your dirty daughter,
And I shall be whiter
Than the whitewash on the wall.

Note.—For "your dirty daughter" read "the Colonel's daughter" —according to taste and circumstances. This was a pre-War Regular Army song that was enthusiastically welcomed and continually sung by the whole B.E.F. The tune is the same as that of *Miles Behind the Lines* (see the Postscript); we cannot name the air, but think that both songs were "set" independently to a piece of band-music of which we possess the score; it is in Common Time. Usually sung without a chorus, but the Brigade of Guards, marching through Beuvry one night in 1915, was heard to sing it with a chorus: "than the wall, than the wall," etc.

Hush! Here comes a Whizz-bang

Air: "Hush! Here Comes the Dream Man." (Pantomime Song; pre-War)

Hush! Here comes a whizz-bang.
Hush! Here comes a whizz-bang,
Now you soldiers, get down those stairs,
Down in your dug-outs and say your prayers.
Hush! Here comes a whizz-bang,
And it's making straight for you:
And you'll see all the wonders of No-Man's Land
If a whizz-bang (bump!) hits you.

The Bells of Hell

Air: Salvation Army Hymn Tune (?)

The bells of hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling
For you but not for me:
And the little devils how they sing-a-ling-a-ling
For you but not for me.
O Death, where is thy sting-a-ling-a-ling,
O Grave, thy victor-ee?
The bells of hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling,
For you but not for me.

Note.—In pre-War days this was a little-known Negro spiritual. In 1914–1918 it attained a new significance.

I Don't Want to Die

Air: ?

I WANT to go home,
I want to go home,
I don't want to go in the trenches no more,
Where whizz-bangs and shrapnel they whistle and roar.
Take me over the sea
Where the Alleyman can't get at me.
Oh my,
I don't want to die,
I want to go home.

NOTE.—This was one of the most famous of war songs. It marks the first disillusionments of the 1914 volunteer when he discovered that war was not romantic and that the Germans were not subhuman. But it is very far from *défaitisme*. It certainly expresses the soldier's war-weariness, but it also conquers it with ridicule.

We are the Boys who Fear no Noise

Air: ?

We are the boys who fear no noise
When the thundering cannons roar.
We are the heroes of the night
And we'd sooner —— than fight,
We're the heroes of the Stand-Back Fusiliers.

If the Sergeant Steals Your Rum

Air: "Never Mind"

If the sergeant steals your rum,
Never mind!
If the sergeant steals your rum,
Never mind!
Though he's just a bloody sot,
You can let him take the lot,
If the sergeant steals your rum,
Never mind!

If old Jerry shells the trench,
Never mind!
If old Jerry shells the trench,
Never mind!
Though the blasted sandbags fly
You have only once to die,
If old Jerry shells the trench,
Never mind!

If you get stuck on the wire,
Never mind!
If you get stuck on the wire,
Never mind!
Though the light's as broad as day
When you die they stop your pay,
If you get stuck on the wire,
Never mind!

When this Blasted War is Over

Air: Hymn, "Take it to the Lord in prayer"

When this blasted war is over,
No more soldiering for me.
When I get my civvy clothes on,
Oh, how happy I shall be!
No more church parades on Sunday,
No more asking for a pass,
I shall tell the Sergeant-Major
To stick his passes —— —— ——.

When this blasted war is over,
No more soldiering for me.
When I get my civvy clothes on,
Oh, how happy I shall be!
I shall sound my own revally,
I shall make my own tattoo:
No more N.C.O.'s to curse me,
No more bloody Army stew.

Note.—Many units sang this additional stanza:

N.C.O.'s will all be navvies,
Privates ride in motor cars;
N.C.O.'s will smoke their woodbines,
Privates puff their big cigars.
No more standing-to in trenches,
Only one more church-parade;
No more shiv'ring on the firestep,
No more Tickler's marmalade.

When the Stew is on the Table

Air: "When the Roll is Called up Yonder"

WHEN the stew is on the table,
When the stew is on the table,
When the stew is on the table,
When the stew is on the table, I'll be there.

When the beer is in the tankard,
When the beer is in the tankard,
When the beer is in the tankard,
When the beer is in the tankard, I'll be there.

He's a Ragtime Soldier

Air: "Ragtime Lover"

He's a ragtime soldier,
Ragtime soldier.
Early on parade every morning,
Standing to attention with his rifle in his hand.
He's a ragtime soldier,
As happy as the flowers in May
(I don't think!),
Fighting for his King and his Country,
All for a shilling a day.

Send Out the Army and the Navy

Air: ?

SEND out the Army and the Navy,
Send out the rank and file,
Send out the brave Territorials,
They'll face the danger with a smile
(I don't think!).
Send out my mother,
Send out my sister and my brother,
But for Gawd's sake don't send me!

NOTE.—On this page in the first edition was *When I Was Single*, which we have since learned to be the chorus of a music-hall song.

On the other hand, we had omitted *Send Out the Army* because we thought it a music-hall song. It is credibly said to have been composed by a Scottish officer and first sung in October 1914; it was very popular until about the end of 1916. This is the former of the two anti-heroic songs mentioned by Mr. J. B. Priestley in the quotation from him in "Additional Songs" (see the Postscript).

Old Soldiers Never Die

Air: "Kind Thoughts can never Die"

Old soldiers never die
Never die,
Never die,
Old soldiers never die—
They simply fade away.

Old soldiers never die,
Never die,
Never die,
Old soldiers never die—
Young ones wish they would.

Plum and Apple

Air: "A Wee Deoch an' Doris."

Plum and Apple,
Apple and Plum.
Plum and Apple,
There is always some.
The A.S.C. get strawberry jam
And lashings of rum.
But we poor blokes
We only get—
Apple and plum.

Note.—"Plum and Apple" in the early years of the War was the only variety of jam which reached the fighting troops. Later, a variety was provided, and so great had been the obloquy heaped on "Plum and Apple" that it was rarely seen at all in 1918.

Far, Far from Ypres

Air: "Sing Me to Sleep." (Sentimental Ballad: pre-War)

FAR, far from Ypres I long to be,
Where German snipers can't snipe at me.
Damp is my dug-out,
Cold are my feet,
Waiting for whizz-bangs
To send me to sleep.

NOTE.—Pronounce "Ypres"—"Eepree."

Glorious

(*Chant*)

GLORIOUS! Glorious!
One bottle of beer among the four of us.
Thank Gawd there are no more of us,
Or one of us would go dry.

Good-bye, Nellie

Air: ?

Good-bye, Nellie,
I'm going across the main.
Farewell, Nellie,
This parting gives me pain.
I shall always love you
As true as the stars above.
I'm going to do my duty
For the girl I love.

Note.—Sung with great sentiment, and no notion that it was ridiculous. Possibly pre-War, but absolutely renewed by the soldiers.

The Old Barbed Wire

Air: ?

If you want to find the sergeant,
I know where he is, I know where he is.
If you want to find the sergeant,
I know where he is,
He's lying on the canteen floor.
I've seen him, I've seen him,
Lying on the canteen floor,
I've seen him,
Lying on the canteen floor.

If you want to find the quarter-bloke,
I know where he is, I know where he is.
If you want to find the quarter-bloke,
I know where he is,
He's miles and miles behind the line.
I've seen him, I've seen him,
Miles and miles behind the line,
I've seen him,
Miles and miles and miles behind the line.

If you want to find the sergeant-major,
I know where he is, I know where he is.
If you want to find the sergeant-major,
I know where he is,
He's boozing up the privates' rum.
I've seen him, I've seen him,
Boozing up the privates' rum,
I've seen him,
Boozing up the privates' rum.

If you want to find the C.O.,
I know where he is, I know where he is.
If you want to find the C.O.,
I know where he is,
He's down in the deep dug-outs.

I've seen him, I've seen him,
Down in the deep dug-outs,
I've seen him,
Down in the deep dug-outs.

If you want to find the old battalion,
I know where they are, I know where they are.
If you want to find the old battalion,
I know where they are,
They're hanging on the old barbed wire.
I've seen 'em, I've seen 'em,
Hanging on the old barbed wire,
I've seen 'em,
Hanging on the old barbed wire.

NOTE.—A significant variant in the last stanza was *your sweetheart* for *the old battalion*, with the corresponding grammatical changes.

III. CHANTS AND SONGS RARELY, IF EVER, SUNG ON THE MARCH

CHANTS AND SONGS

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It Was Christmas Day in the Workhouse

Recitative

It was Christmas Day in the workhouse,
And the master had brought in the duff.
Up spake a sturdy pauper,
With a face as bold as brass,
"We don't want your Christmas pudden,
You can stick it —— —— ——!"

It was Christmas Day in the harem
And the eunuchs were standing around.
In strode the bold, bad Sultan
And gazed on his marble halls.
"What would you like for Christmas, boys?"
And the eunuchs answered, "——"

Note.—This in pre-War days was a kind of folk-ballad: in 1914–1918 it became essentially a soldiers' ballad. It is noticeable that in this group of chants and songs, the pre-War folk-ballad and folk-song element is very strong. But just as the soldiers of 1914–1918 gave to numerous pre-War Regular Army words and phrases a new and more picturesque life, so they adopted or adapted many folk-songs (some of which were known to the Regulars) and rendered them more vivid.

A folk-song omitted by us, but sung freely by the soldier, was *Twelve are the Twelve Apostles*. But we have to draw a rather rigid line in this group, for otherwise we should not know where to stop.

Old Mother Riley

Air:?

Old Mother Riley had a little kid,
Poor little blighter, he wasn't very big.
He wasn't very big
And he wasn't very small.
Poor little blighter, he had only one ——

Note.—Before 1914, a male folk-song; during the War, very definitely a soldiers' song.

My Nelly

Air: "Three Blind Mice"

My Nelly's a goer,
My Nelly's a goer!
She's got such wonderful eyes of blue.
She uses such wonderful language too,
Her favourite expression is, —— to you.
My Nelly's a goer.

Casey Jones

Air: "Casey Jones." (Comic song, music-halls: War period)

CASEY JONES,
Standing on the fire-step,
Casey Jones,
With a pistol in his hand.
Casey Jones,
Standing on the fire-step,
Firing Very lights into No-Man's Land
(La-diddy-dah-dah—
Dah!—Dah!)

An eight-lined snatch, more witty than the run of soldiers' songs. But this gay and ribald commentary upon an old lady's misfortunes can hardly be printed here. There is some reason to believe that in pre-War days it existed as a ditty sung occasionally by "the lads of the village."

I've Lost My Rifle and Bayonet

Air: "Since I lost You." (Sentimental ballad: pre-War)

I've lost my rifle and bayonet,
I've lost my pull-through too,
I've lost my disc and my puttees,
I've lost my four-by-two.
I've lost my housewife and hold-all,
I've lost my button-stick too.
I've lost my rations and greatcoat—
Sergeant, what shall I do?

Note.—*Pull-through* was a long cord for cleaning the barrel of a rifle. It was looped at one end and around this loop was wrapped a small piece of flannel—*four-by-two*—soaked in oil. *Housewife* or *hussif* was a small cloth compendium in which were kept needles, cotton, wool, etc. *Hold-all:* a coarse linen receptacle, tabbed and pouched to hold in due order knife, fork, spoon, toothbrush, and—any other articles. *Button-stick:* a thin strip of brass split down the centre, the split ending in a small circular hole. The button-stick was placed behind several brass buttons at once—the tunic being rucked up to bring the buttons close together. Soldier's friend—a pink metal-cleaning paste—could then be smeared over them all without staining the khaki. *Disc* was the identity disc, a small medallion of brass or red or green composition on which were stamped a soldier's name, regiment, number and religion, so that, if he were killed or rendered unconscious, he could be identified.

A popular variant was:

I've lost my rifle and bayonet,
I've lost my pull-through too,
I've lost the socks that you sent me—
They lasted the whole winter through.
I've lost the razor that shaved me,
I've lost my four-by-two,
I've lost my hold-all, so now I've got blow-all,
Since I've lost you.

Michael Finnigan

(*Chant*)

Poor old Michael Finnigan,
He grew whiskers on his chinnigan.
The wind came out,
And blew them in again,
And that's the end of poor Michael Finnigan.

Note.—A pre-war folk-song which the soldiers resuscitated and gave a new life much more vigorous than that which it had in its early days.

I Don't Want to be a Soldier

Air: "On Sunday I Walk out with a Soldier"

I DON'T want to be a soldier,
I don't want to go to war.
I'd rather stay at home,
Around the streets to roam,
And live on the earnings of a —— lady-typist.
I don't want a bayonet in my belly,
I don't want my —— shot away.
I'd rather stay in England,
In merry, merry England,
And —— my bloody life away.

NOTE.—This song was a soldier's parody of the song noted above; the original, we are told, belonged to a revue, perhaps *Bric-a-Brac*.

Can We Clean Your Windows?

(*Chant*)

Can we clean your windows, mum?
We'll make em shine,
Bloody fine:
We'll make 'em shine,
Bloody fine.
Not to-day.
Run away!
"All right," says poor old Jim,
As he threw down his bucket,
And he called out, "Drat it!
Can we clean your windows, mum?"

Note.—For *drat it* understand a dissyllabic phrase rhyming with *bucket*.

Greeting to the Sergeant

(*Chant*)

You've got a kind face, you old bastard,
You ought to be bloodywell shot:
You ought to be tied to a gun-wheel,
And left there to bloodywell rot.

GLOSSARY

* Means a word not strictly slang: official, semi-official, or technical.

*A.—Worn on the regimental shoulder-colours by those Australian troops who had served at Anzac, i.e. Gallipoli.

Abdul.—Turk, individual or collective. (Cf. *Johnny.*)

About Turn.—The village of Hébuterne.

*Ace.—A fighting air-pilot of outstanding ability. Obviously, from cards.

Ack Emma.—Air Mechanic, in the Royal Air Force. Also a.m. = morning. (Cf. *Pip Emma.*)

Alley.—Run away! Clear out! Or in full, *Alley tootsweet.* From the French *Allez tout de suite.*

Ally Sloper's Cavalry.—The A.S.C.—Army Service Corps—responsible for all road transport behind the lines. Ally Sloper was a comic character in a popular paper (pre-War) called *Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday.* The A.S.C. were so named by the infantry and artillery because, with their good pay, comfort and comparative safety, they were not considered soldiers at all. (Cf. *R.A.M.C.*) A variant was *Army Safety Corps.*

Ammo.—Short for ammunition.

Any More for Any More.—A jocular shout by the orderly man (cf.) when he had given every man his share of a meal, and still had some stew or

tea or rice remaining. Also used by the man running a Crown and Anchor board or a House outfit, asking others to join in before the game commenced.

ANZAC.—Short for A.N.Z.A.C.—Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Also for the district in Gallipoli near Anzac Cove, where the Australian and New Zealand landing was made. A name made popular by journalists at the time of the Gallipoli campaign, and afterwards applied as a synonym, singular and plural, for Australian or New Zealand troops. Rarely, if ever, used by English soldiers, who preferred *Aussie* or *Digger* (cf.).

*A.P.M.—Assistant Provost Marshal. A sort of Head Constable of Military Police. A harrier of too lively subalterns, an eagle eye (? or a vulture's) for omitted salutes, surreptitious drinks, over-stayed passes. It is said that A.P.M.'s often acted as guides for Generals desirous of seeing the night-life of the large towns: a suitable employment. For the hardened type of *A.P.M.*, see C. E. Montague's *Rough Justice* (Chatto & Windus, 1926). Cf. *Red Caps* and *Battle Police*.

APRÈS LA GUERRE.—The fact that this phrase was so soon caught from the French is a sure indication of how much the thought and wish for peace was in everyone's mind. This is not to be construed as *défaitisme*. *Après la guerre* carried two connotations for the soldier: It was used jokingly for the indefinite and remote future, e.g. "When will you marry me?—Oh, après la guerre," or "When's the Colonel coming up the line?—Après la guerre." And, secondly, the phrase was a depository of secret sentiment, of longing for survival and for the return of decency,

quiet and beauty. The two usages are clearly seen in the ribald ditty composed by some unknown warrior—"Après la guerre finie" (page 25), and the later music-hall song, fairly popular in 1917–18, of which the refrain began, "Après la guerre, There'll be a good time everywhere: smiling faces, gladsome missus," etc. (Cf. *Blighty*.)

ARCHIE.—Short for Archibald: facetious name for anti-aircraft gun; and also for its shell bursts.

*AREA COMMANDANT.—A sort of super *Town Major* (cf.) in charge of an area of some square miles behind the lines and responsible for the provision of adequate camps and billets, and for amicable adjustments of disputes with French residents. An excellent and detailed account of this routine will be found in Mr. R. A. Mottram's contribution to *Three Personal Records of the War* (Scholartis Press, 1929).

ARGUE THE TOSS.—To dispute loudly and long, especially when such argument was an annoyance to others not involved (e.g. *Chew the Fat*).

ARM.—To chance your arm: to take a risk in the hope of achieving something worth while. Metaphor from boxing.

ARTILLERY DUEL.—Technically, this was a contest between the artillery of each side, in which practically all guns available were employed continuously. In practice, the German artillery battered the British infantry, and our artillery the German infantry, until supplies of ammunition ran short. It was a pleasant sport for the gunners.

AUSSIE.—Used by Australians originally as an affectionate diminutive of *Australia*. Applied by

British troops to the Australian soldiers, in both singular and plural. (Cf. *Anzac* and *Digger*.)

Babbling Brook.—Cook. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

Bags.—Plenty, lots. E.g. "Got any bully?"—"Yes, bags of it." And especially *bags of room*.

Balloon.—What time does the balloon go up? was a favourite way of asking the time fixed for any special parade or "stunt". The balloon going up was equivalent to the chief event of the day.

Bandhook.—A rifle. From the Arabic for a fire-arm, originally for a cross-bow. The native Egyptians still call Venice "Bundhookia"—the place of the big guns. (Cf. *Hipe*.)

*Barbed Wire.—Entanglements of barbed wire were erected in front of the trenches by both sides. Men were frequently caught in these at night, and during day-time attacks, when they became easy targets for machine-guns. The dead bodies could not fall to the ground, but hung sagging in limp and often grotesque attitudes among the wilderness of wire. Hence it became a common euphemism for death, hard and bitter, to say that a man was "hanging on the old barbed wire." This was an ironic reply often given by survivors at roll-call after an attack, when the name of a man who had been killed was called. (Cf. the song, "The Old Barbed Wire," page 72, and *Concertina Wire*, *Trip Wire*.)

*Barrage.—A concentration of heavy artillery fire in front of advancing or retreating troops to afford them protection. Also, facetiously, for any excessive quantity. "We've had a perfect barrage of orders to-day." A *creeping* barrage was one which moved forward (or back) at time

intervals. A *box barrage*, one surrounding a small area; used especially for raids. *Lifting the barrage* meant advancing a creeping barrage; as the range increased, the gun barrels would be elevated.

BASE-WALLAH.—A soldier perpetually at the Base, and so living comfortably and safely. (Cf. *Wallah.*)

BATT.—Short for battalion. Cf. *Divvy* = division.

BATTLE BOWLER.—Officers' slang for steel helmet. (Cf. *Tin Hat.*)

*BATTLE ORDER.—A reduced equipment of the infantry, the pack or valise being left in store and the haversack moved into its place on the back. The weight thus taken away in order to make the tired infantryman more mobile was replaced by still greater weight of spades, picks, bombs, extra bandoliers of ammunition, sandbags, etc. (Cf. *Pack.*)

*BATTLE POLICE.—Military policemen on special duty behind the lines during an attack, armed with revolvers and authority to stop all unwounded stragglers and herd them back (if necessary with the revolvers) to the danger area where military police never appeared. (Cf. *Red Caps* and *A.P.M.*)

BEAT.—See *Dead Beat.*

BEATEN TO THE WIDE.—See *Dead Beat.*

BE GOOD.—An almost nonsensical exclamation, used in parting company, chiefly by officers. Meant facetiously. Sometimes given in full—"Be good. And if you can't be good, be careful." Originally of sexual meaning, but this soon became forgotten in the multitudinous uses to which the phrase was put. (Cf. *Cheero* and *Chin-Chin.*)

Before You Come Up.—The classic crushing retort of the private soldier. The unanswerable argument from experience and seniority. It means—"I was in the army before you, I know more than you are capable of knowing, I've suffered more than you, I've done more than you, I'm a better soldier than you and a better man. And I refuse to believe a word you say." "Come" is the normal illiterate error for "came". Later, many elaborations were invented such as, "Before you knew what a button-stick was"; "Before you had a regimental number"; even "Before you was breeched" or "Before you nipped." And elaborating further, "I was cutting barbed wire while you was cutting your milk teeth."

*Bell Tent.—Named presumably from its shape, which however before 1914 had become almost a perfect cone (or perhaps the Army didn't know what a cone was ?), supported by a central pole and stay ropes. Held sixteen men in discomfort. (Cf. *Bivvy*.)

*Berm.—Ledge in the parapet of a trench, on which bombs, ammunition, etc., could be stored.

Big Noise.—A Staff Officer, General, Politician, or Distinguished Foreign Personage visiting the troops. From the loud and important voices used by such persons.

*Billet.—Noun. A house, barn or stable, in which troops were housed. Most billets had been abandoned by the civilian owners; further behind the lines, where civilians remained, camps were usually available. Also used as a verb. For an amusing description of luxurious billet life in England, see *Grey Dawn—Red Night*, by J. L. Hodson (Gollancz, 1929).

Bill Harris.—Bilharzia, a disease prevalent in Egypt, contracted from the water of the Nile.

Billjim.—An Australian. (Composite word.)

Binge.—An expedition deliberately undertaken in company for the purpose of relieving depression, celebrating an occasion or a spasm of high spirits, by becoming intoxicated. But music and singing are essentially part of a *binge*. More an officers' word than a private soldier's. (Cf. *Zig-zag*, *Tight*, *Blotto*, *Blind*.) Probably derived from eighteenth century slang *Bingo*, meaning brandy. Grose also gives *Bingo Boy*: a dram drinker; very interesting in view of *The Bing Boys*, a very popular musical comedy in 1916–17 which made famous the song, "Another little drink wouldn't do us any harm."

Bint.—A young female. The Arabic *bint*: daughter: a woman, as distinct from a lady.

Bird.—A young woman, especially in an amorous context, respectable or otherwise. The word is typical of a common male attitude to women, classifying them with pets and other instruments of pleasure. (Cf. *Skirt*, *Tart*, *Piece*, *Square-pusher*.)

Birdlime.—Time. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

*Biscuits.—Small square mattresses, three making a bed for one man, in camp or barracks. Very hard: hence the name.

Bivvy.—Bivouac. A makeshift tent to hold a few men: a waterproof sheet (or sheets) being supported by a central ridge pole three feet or so above the ground. Bivouacs provided a pleasant feeling of privacy and airiness—in summer. The word was also used loosely for a dug-out or other form of temporary habitation. (Cf. *Dug-out* and *Bell-Tent*.)

Blighty.—England, in the sense of home. In this one word was gathered all the soldier's home-

sickness and affection and war-weariness. Far more than the actual distance separated him from England, even—or most of all—in France. The military machine to which he was bond-slave effectively stultified his desire to return, and his own sense of duty held him in France. But the deepest separation was that caused by the difference in his life, in his outward circumstance, the forces operating on him and his own responses to them. He had entered another, insane, existence, ugly, precarious, fatiguing, bearing hardly any resemblance to his normal life, which now had become abnormal, incredible. *Blighty* to the soldier was a sort of faerie, a paradise which he could faintly remember, a never-never land. The word was also used as an adjective, not merely for things English and homelike, but as a general expression of approval. E.g. "This is real Blighty butter"—meaning ideal, as good as English. It was also used of a wound (cf. *Blighty One*). The word is a corruption of the Hindustani *bilaik*: foreign country, especially England. It often occurs in the adjectival form *bilaiti*; e.g. *bilaiti bègun*: foreign egg-plant, i.e. tomato. (Cf. also Arabic *beladi* = my own country. (Cf. *Après la guerre*.)

Blighty One.—A wound sufficiently serious to take the sufferer back to England (from France). Minor and mortal wounds were treated in France, but a *Blighty One* was naturally a source of great joy to the receiver, and aroused envy, mingled with congratulations, in his comrades. A sufficient commentary in itself on the glory of war. (Cf. *Packet*.)

Blimp.—Air Force slang for the type of small, dirigible white airship used principally for anti-submarine surveys over the Channel.

Blind.—Adjective: helplessly drunk. Noun: a drinking expedition, undertaken deliberately in order to become intoxicated. A more expert and brutal term than *binge* (cf.), obviously derived from the power of liquor to derange the eyesight (cf. *Squiffy*. Also *Zig-zag*, *Tight*, *Blotto*.) Verb: to curse and swear furiously, especially to insult another person. Perhaps from the oath—*Blind your eyes*, a variation of *Blast your eyes!*

Block.—One's head. To "do one's block" meant "to lose one's senses. (Cf. *Doolally*.)

Blotto.—Drunk. Perhaps facetiously derived from the absorbing qualities of blotting-paper. The *N.E.D.* actually defines blotting-paper as "bibulous." (Cf. *Zig-zag*, *Tight*, *Squiffy*, *Binge*, *Blind*.)

Boche.—(Also spelt *Bosche* in English.) French slang for "German", taken into English: individual or general, noun and adjective. Practically never used by private soldiers, confined to officers. The word was first used in the phrase *tête de boche*, in which the great philologist, Albert Dauzat, believes "boche" to be simply an abbreviation of *caboche*—a head, such redundancies being frequent in the vulgar tongue. *Tête de boche* was used as early as 1870 of obstinate persons. In 1874 French typographers, it is recorded, applied it to German compositors. By 1883 (states Alfred Delvau's *Dictionnaire de la Langue Verte*) the phrase had come to have the meaning of *mauvais sujet* and was so used especially by prostitutes. The Germans, having among the French a reputation for obstinacy and perhaps as "bad lots", from *Allemands* became *Alleboches* and *Alboches*. About 1900 *Alboche* was shortened to *Boche* as a generic name for Germans. During the war propagandist posters

revived the memory of *Alboche* by making it *Sale Boche*. Déchelette in his fascinating *L'Argot des Poilus* (1918) has his own theory of the origin of the word: that it comes by anagram from *schwob* (cf. English slang *swab*), a term of contempt applied by Alsatians to Germans in the late nineteenth century. The extent to which this word has fascinated the French may be gauged from the publication of R. Lestrange's *Petite Monographie du mot Boche*, 1918. (Cf. *Fritz*, *Hun*, *Jerry*.)

Bon.—Exclamation or adjective signifying pleasure or approval: Taken over from the French. Typical uses were "That's bon!" "We've got a bon dugout here." "The rations are bon," and, simply, "Bon!" The reverse was not *pas bon* but *no bon*. (Cf. *Bon Time*.)

Bon Time.—A period, brief or not, when unexpected happiness came the way of the soldier: "We had a bon time at Noeux-les-Mines": "Dick says he's having a bon time with the V.A.D.'s."

Bonce.—The head, e.g. "I'll give you a crack on the bonce."

Bonza.—Good. (Australian, from mining.)

Booze.—Pre-war Cockney. Verb: to drink to excess or, in another sense, simply to drink. Noun: intoxicating liquor, especially beer. (Cf. *Mop Up*, *Tight*, *Blotto*.) Originally Elizabethan from Dutch.

Boozer.—A public-house or other liquor-shop; also a man who drank habitually and excessively.

Box Open, Box Shut.—A phrase used when offering cigarettes in company. The inference being that the donor's generosity was limited by hard circumstance. Those who were quick or near got a cigarette. Most soldiers kept a permanent

tin, round or flat, into which were emptied the paper packets of "issue" or canteen cigarettes, which otherwise would have been crushed to uselessness. As the soldier had to carry his whole store about with him, a box that would hold a hundred was far more useful than any hasped silver or gold case.

*Bracketing.—Trial shots to right and left, in front and behind the target, by the Artillery. (Cf. *Registering*.)

Brass Hats.—Generals and Staff officers. So called because of the lavish display of gold lace on their caps. A less derisive and frequent variant: *Tabs*.

*Break Through. Noun and verb. Attack which penetrated the enemy's three lines of trenches and afforded a possibility of open warfare.

Breather.—A short pause or period of rest in drill or during a piece of hard work, in which the men's breathing could slow down to normal.

Breeze-up.—Variation of *Wind-up* (cf.)

*British Warm.—An overcoat falling only to the knees and close-fitting at the waist; worn by mounted troops and officers generally.

Buck.—Nickname for any man named Taylor. (Cf. *Smudger*, *Darky*, etc.)

Buckle.—Short for *buckle-my-shoe*, a roundabout way of saying "Jew." (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

Buckshee.—Surplus; free; adjective applied to anything come by with unexpected ease, e.g. "There's some buckshee rum going (cf.) to-night." Also used as an adverb, e.g. "I got this bread from the cookhouse, buckshee." Or even as a noun, meaning an extra share or surplus. "Now the rice has gone round, what about a bit of buckshee?" Said to be a development of the Persian *bucksheesh*: a gratuity, a tip.

Buddoo.—Arab. *Bedu* or *Beduin*. Used by troops in Mesopotamia and Palestine.

Bull-Ring.—Training ground at the Base, notorious for persecution of up-the-line soldiers by *Base-Wallahs*. From Spanish bull-fights because of cruelty and the fact that bull-rings were sited on sand. The most notorious was at *Etaples* (cf.).

*Bully-Beef.—Beef cooked, preserved and tinned. Chiefly from the Argentine Republic. When the cooks got it, it was served in stew. When the cooks' "services were not available", it was eaten either cold or fried in a canteen. (Cf. *Emergency Rations*, *Orderly Man*, *Cooker* and *Canteen*.) Frequently abbreviated to *Bully*.

Bumf.—Toilet paper or newspaper used for that purpose. Short for *bum-fodder*, an expression dating back to the seventeenth century (Urquhart).

Bump.—The near-by explosion of a shell. Used as a verb almost always in the passive voice, e.g. "We didn't half get bumped last night."

Burgue (*or* Burgoo)—Oatmeal porridge. Pronounced by English troops with a hard *g* and the final vowel sound—*ew*; by Australians with a hard *g* but with the last syllable—*oo*. First recorded use 1750. Found in Marryat 1833 and Sala 1863. Occasionally applied by Australians to stew. From *burghul*, Turkish and Arabic for wheat-porridge.

'Bus.—Royal Air Force slang, affectionate and facetious, for an aeroplane.

Bushel and Peck.—Neck. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

Buzzer.—The small board with a tapping lever used for sending messages in Morse code over the field telegraph.

*C3.—Early in the war only men fit for active service were accepted. Afterwards recruits were taken for Home, Garrison and Base duties, and were graded according to physical fitness, A1, B2, B3. C3 was the lowest category. Wounded men were also classified during convalesence in this manner. *C3* thus became a term of contempt—*not* applied to a man who *was C3*, but, by analogy, to an action.

Ça ne fait rien—See *San Fairy Ann*.

*Cadre.—A nucleus of a hundred or less officers and men from a battalion. As the war progressed it was found that a battalion put into an attack was almost sure to lose anything from fifty to ninety per cent of its strength in casualties (far more than the old-fashioned decimation—one in ten). It was extremely difficult to build up the shell-shocked and dispirited remainder, even with reinforcements, into an efficient battalion. Hence arose the practice of keeping a cadre out of the slaughter so that a continuity of organization could be preserved after the attack had failed or partially succeeded. This historical fact introduced into an argument will blunt at once all loose glorification of the war of attrition. By a significant coincidence the word *cadre* is closely related to *cadaver* = a corpse.

Cain and Abel.—Table. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

*Camouflage.—French. The act of concealing positions from the enemy's observation; or the means employed for the purpose. Guns were painted in parti-colours and roads were hung with wire-netting on which fluttered small pieces of brown and green rag. Ships were painted in parti-colours. Naturally the soldier adopted the term as a useful variant of *eye-wash* (cf.).

CANNON-FODDER.—All combatant soldiers below the rank of, say, major: especially the infantry. A journalistic expression, only used with the implication of quotation, by soldiers. German origin.

*CANTEEN.—A tin receptacle carried in the infantryman's equipment, enclosed in a cotton cover, immediately under his valise (cf. *Pack*). The artillery, cavalry, and other mounted troops had one shaped like a thin cylinder, but the infantry *canteen* was, looked at from above, about three-quarters of an oval. It was in two parts, one fitting into the other. In his *canteen* the soldier received from the orderly man all his meals, stew, tea, soup, rice, porridge in the lower and deeper section, bacon in the shallower top. When cooked food was not available, he cooked his own in his canteen over a fire or a "*Tommy*" *Cooker* (cf.). Also cf. *Orderly Man*, *Dixie*, *Dish Out*.

In another sense a canteen was an officially-appointed bar and grocer's shop and tobacconist's, organized by the unit. There were sometimes two, a dry and wet canteen; but usually only one —the dry. Both tended to run short of supplies and to lead a very intermittent existence. They really flourished only on Divisional Rest—prolonged periods out of the line.

CANTEEN MEDALS.—Beer stains on the breast of a tunic. Pre-War Regular Army.

*CAP OFF.—When a man was reported by an N.C.O. or an officer as having committed a military crime, such as appearing on parade with a button unfastened or his hair more than one-eighth of an inch long, he had to present himself the next morning to his Company Commander (or, if his were a repeated or more serious offence, to his Commanding Officer). To be more precise, he did not present himself but was presented: two

men acting as escort, one in front and one behind; the Sergeant-Major ordering them in after this fashion, "Cap Off!"—to the prisoner (*not* the accused). "Prisoner and escort, right turn! quick march! left wheel! right turn! halt!" So, capless, beltless, flanked on either side by his escort, his heels together, his thumbs in line with the seam of his trousers, his eyes fixed to the front, the offender heard the charge against him read out in cumbersome and almost meaningless phrases. He was asked what he had to say in defence or mitigation, but he was usually too bewildered (or too old a soldier) to utter a word. If he did attempt an explanation, he was sure to be cut short by a bored officer; or else by a bellow from the sergeant-major ordering him to look to his front or straighten his pose. Once the machinery of military law was set in motion, there was little injustice done, except what is inherent in its rough-and-ready methods. Injustices began before that, with officers and N.C.O.'s who would invent crimes out of malice or wantonness. If a soldier incurred the dislike of an unscrupulous superior, his life was made a misery and there was no way of escaping a thousand daily vexations and petty punishments. The convention of compelling a prisoner to remove his cap is peculiar: in some battalions he was allowed to hold it in his hand, in others the escort or the sergeant-major held it for fear (it was rumoured) the poor creature lost his temper and flung the piece of khaki cloth at his judges. He was compelled to enter without a belt or "side-arms" (i.e. bayonet) for a similar reason. This may have been due to foresight or cowardice in the C.O., but it was just as likely a merciful proviso to prevent a desperate man steeping himself in further crime. For the procedure of an

English court-martial, see A. P. Herbert's *The Secret Battle*; for that of a German, see A. J. Evans's *The Escaping Club*. (Cf. *Orders* and *High Jump*.)

Cat Walk.—Pathway of bricks across French and Belgian farm fields; often only one brick wide.

*C.B.—Confined to barracks. A minor punishment, only applicable out of the line. A soldier on C.B. had to report, in what would normally be his free time, to the guard-room at regular intervals. He was also liable for extra fatigues.

*C.C.S.—Casualty Clearing Station. Tents or huts behind the lines where operations were performed, and wounded were classified into dangerous, slight and "return to England" cases.

Char.—Tea. From the Hindustani. Compare Arabic *chai*.

Chatt.—The louse. The word may be used in the singular, but the insect was found (or it escaped) in hordes. *Chatt* is given by Grose, who suggests it may be derived from *Chattell*, i.e. something personal, carried about. From this noun developed the verb, meaning to rid oneself of a proportion of the parasites by searching the seams of one's uniform and underwear and cracking the lice between the thumb-nails. They squelched blood, not their own! Another and better method was to take off the garment and run the seams over a candle flame. A vivid crackling noise announced the death of the enemy—and eggs. *Chatts* were *not* fleas or bugs; they did not jump but crept. They were a pale fawn in colour, and left their blotchy red bites all over the body except—thanks be—in the hair of the head. They also created a peculiar sour, stale smell. Living in the same clothes without a bath

for weeks on end, it was impossible for a private soldier to be without them, and the most thorough *chattings* were little more than demonstrations of ill-will. Baths and a change of clothing at a *delousing station* (cf.) were the only relief—and they happened rarely. As time went on, *chatting* became part of normal routine during quiet and rest periods; indeed, it was almost a social occasion, and in huts or dug-outs during the winter, and outdoors if there was summer sunshine, rows of men could often be seen with their shirts or trousers or tunics laid over their knees, cracking lice and jokes together. What has become of all the millions of these parasites since the War is an unsolved problem. It was said at the time, by the knowing ones, that they were indigenous to the soil of France. But they were also rife in Gallipoli. On the other hand, German dug-outs often had a peculiar species of small red lice crawling on their walls and blankets. Déchelette in his dictionary of French soldiers' slang has this priceless remark: "Les gaux [poux] craignent la solitude et ont un profond sentiment de la famille." He adds: "Les gaux ont une chambre à coucher bien chaude, bien douillette, où la table est toujours mise. Alors, dans leurs nombreux loisirs, ils suivent les conseils du créateur: ils multiplient." He notes that lice always quit a man soon after he is killed, i.e. when he becomes cold. Some men believed in keeping lice on the move by turning their shirt as often as possible (see A. J. Evans, *The Escaping Club*.)

CHEERIO.—See *Cheero*.

CHEERO.—A salutation. A modern unpretentious equivalent of the Roman *Ave* and *Vale*, as well as the Saxon *Wassail!* Perhaps derived from

the pre-war Cockney *what cheer!* The word was later developed, chiefly by officers, into *Cheerio.* (Cf. *Chin-Chin* and *Be Good.*)

*Chevron.—The original *chevrons* were always called *stripes* (cf.). Later in the war a system was instituted by which soldiers wore on the lower right sleeve small *chevrons*, one to show they had been on active service at all, and one more for every completed year of active service. 1914 was denoted by a red *chevron*, later years by blue. (Cf. *Gold Stripe.*)

Chew the Fat.—To sulk, to be resentful. Especially to murmur aloud. E.g. "Stop chewing the fat, now, and get the job done!"

Chew the Rag.—To argue endlessly or without hope of a definite agreement. E.g. "Them two's always chewing the rag about carrying the Lewis (gun)." See the Postscript.

Chin-Chin.—Comes from the Chinese; uttered just before drinking liquor, implying general goodwill, satisfaction and hope. (Cf. *Cheero* and *Be Good.*)

*Chin-Strap.—Except by mounted troops the *chin-straps* of khaki field-service caps were never used. But a steel helmet was liable to fall off and the chin-strap was often lowered round the jaw. (Many men, however, preferred to keep it hanging loosely on the back of the neck for fear a bullet or fragment of shrapnel striking the helmet should cause the strap to choke them or to break their jaw.) The phrase *to come in on your chin-strap* meant to finish a march or a carrying party so fatigued that (figuratively) only the *chin-strap* kept the body upright.

Chink.—A Chinese. There was a large Chinese Labour Corps employed behind the lines and

at the Bases in France. They were liked because they were good-natured and amusing, but they never appeared to do any work. (Cf. *Goody-la! Russki, Macaroni, Froggie, Pork-and-Beans, Aussie, Yank.*)

*Chit. (From Hindustani *chitthi.*) Any sort of handwritten message or authorization.

Chronic.—Very bad: adjective or adverb. Taken probably from medical idiom, without any idea of its meaning, merely with a vague association of unhappiness. Used especially in the phrase, "The pain's something chronic." (Cf. *Proper.*)

Chubarrow.—Shut up! Hold your tongue! (From Hindustani *chupreo.*)

Chum.—More popular, at least with non-Cockney troops, than either *mate* or *pal.* Used also as a vocative, especially in addressing strangers, e.g. "Give us (i.e. me) a light, chum?" Almost invariably used in the opening phrase, speaking to a wounded man. See the Postscript.

Circus.—A combination of German fighting aeroplanes under Count von Richthofen, which at one time was all-conquering. So called for their habit of circling round and round one British or French machine at a time, or from the bright colours in which the machines were painted.

Civvy.—Civilian: adjective or noun. A word freighted with much emotion, envy, fond memories and eternal hope. See the songs, "When this Blasted War is Over" (page 63) and "I Wore a Tunic" (page 48).

Click.—To strike up a temporary acquaintance for sentimental purposes with a stranger of the opposite sex in the street or other public place. A modern use of the word, easily understood, from the slight noise made when two parts fit

easily together. *Clicking* always began with a mingling of glances: it was at once realized that two moods and two desires fitted, for the moment, perfectly. *To click* for anything fortunate, was another variation, e.g. "Bill's clicked for leave." Also, *To click a guard*, etc., to run into an extra duty.

Clink.—The guard-room in which offenders against military law were detained pending trial by the C.O. or Court Martial. *Clink* was a criminal's name for a prison in Southwark. Grose suggests the clinking of fetters as the origin. (Cf. *Jug.*)

Clobber.—Clothing; especially off the body.

Clock.—Face. Used in derision or boisterous fun. (Cf. *Dial.*)

Coal-box.—The shellburst of a 5·9 or heavier shell. From the black smoke. Sometimes used of the shell itself. (Cf. *Johnson* and *Crump.*)

Cold Feet.—Cowardice, temperamental and permanent. Not to be confused with *wind-up* (cf.).

Cold Meat Ticket.—*Identity disc* (cf.).

Column.—Cf. *Dodging the Column.*

*Complaints.—A private soldier had to make his *complaints* through his platoon sergeant, though he could request to be taken before his Commanding Officer. In practice, it was extremely unwise to make *complaints.*

*Complaints, Any.—*Any Complaints?* The standardized request made by the orderly sergeant, accompanying the orderly officer on a round of barracks or huts or tents at dinner time. Justifiable (i.e. very extreme) complaints about food were sometimes attended to.

Compree.—"Do you understand?" English-for-French, in constant use—naturally.

Comsah.—Generic name for anything. Alternative to *Oojah* (cf.). From French comme ça.

Concertina Wire.—A barbless form of wire used by the French for entanglements; when touched, it coiled about the intruder.

Conshie, properly *Conscie*.—A conscientious objector. Some refused to fight, others went further and refused to participate in manual or clerical labour behind the lines or in their own countries. A variant is *C.O.*, which has occasionally led to confusion with *C.O.* = commanding officer.

Consolidate.—To maintain an advantage, especially to curry favour with authority in order that a cushy job might be continued. From the technical *consolidate*—to fortify and make secure a trench or other position.

*Cooker.—Travelling field-kitchen, wheeled and pulled by horses and mules. In these the company cooks made tea, stew, porridge, rice, etc., and frequently took the "cookers" amazingly close to the front line. (Cf. *Dixie*, *Orderly Man*, *Burgue*.)

Coot.—A louse. Pre-war cockney: said to be derived from the name of a titled lady who suffered in this way. (Cf. *Chat*.)

Corp.—Familiar for Corporal. Used only in the vocative.

*Course.—A "refresher" *course* of instruction given behind the lines to which selected officers, N.C.O.'s and men were sent on occasion. There were *courses* in bombing, Lewis-gunnery, signalling, physical training, map reading, and other subjects: and it was soon fairly obvious that they were devised more for the recreation of soldiers who had had long spells of duty in the line than for the direct improvement of efficiency.

Crabs.—Lice. See *Draw Crabs* and *Chatt.*

Crime Sheet.—A record of a soldier's trials and punishments under Military law.

Crummy.—Itchy because of louse-bites. (Cf. *Chatt.*)

Crump.—Synonymous with *Coal-box* (cf.)

*C.T.—Communication Trench, i.e. one not facing the enemy and not prepared for defence.

Cubby Hole.—A small dug-out or shelter. Perhaps from fox-hunting. Or from *cupboard.* (Cf. *Dug-out.*)

*Curtain Fire.—A concentration of shell fire between a body of troops and the enemy. Not necessarily for a general attack or retreat. (Cf. *Barrage.*)

Cushy.—Soft; comfortable; luxurious. Especially, safe where danger was the general rule. Other people were always getting cushy jobs. Typical uses were, "This is a cushy sector"; "He's been having a cushy time." (From Hindustani.)

Darky.—Prefix or synonym for the surname Smith. Probably of Cockney origin. (Cf. *Nobby* and *Smudger.*)

Daisy Roots.—Boots. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang.*)

Damn All.—Nothing. Used to give emphasis. E.g. "I worked like a nigger all day and what did I get?—damn all!" A bowdlerization of a foul expression. (Cf. *Sweet Fanny Adams.*)

*D.C.M.—Most civilians knew that this stood for Distinguished Conduct Medal. To soldiers its first connotation, however, was District Court Martial.

Dead Beat.—Utterly fatigued; worn out and past caring. Frequently varied to *Beaten to the Wide.* Probably from the old days of penal flogging for slight offences. (Cf. *Chin Strap.*)

Deadnuts.—Enthusiastic, keen, desirous, e.g. "He's deadnuts on maconachie."

Deep End.—*To go off the deep end* was to lose one's temper abruptly and violently. Anyone who has seen a portly man plunge into the six-foot end of a public swimming bath will understand the origin of the metaphor. (Cf. *Shirty*.)

Dekko.—Look! Watch! (From Hindustani imperative of *dekhna*.) Also used as a noun, e.g. "Let's have a dekko at the wire."

*De-Lousing Station.—Huts where troops out of the line or proceeding on leave could have a bath and exchange their lice-ridden clothing, not for new but for old garments which had been baked in ovens at a temperature which, it was believed, was sufficiently high to kill lice. (Cf. *Chatt*.)

Derby Men.—Men recruited under a voluntary scheme instituted, just before conscription became law, by Lord Derby. It was understood that young and unmarried men were to be called for service before the others.

Dial.—Face. (Cf. *Clock*.)

Dicky Dirt.—Shirt. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

Digger.—Used by Australian Troops as a vocative for either a personal friend or a stranger, e.g. "Hello, digger, what about a drink?" Derived from the first days of the gold-fields in Australia when the word was used to distinguish the holder of mining rights for a few square yards from a "squatter" or farmer. In time, the *diggers* became a fairly common term for Australian troops and (among British troops) sometimes for New Zealanders, and later in the war it was often used as a vocative by English soldiers in place of the commoner "chum" or "chummy".

Dingo.—Slightly insane. Probably from the French slang *dingot*=mad, eccentric. *Dingot* is an altered abbreviation of *louftingue*=mad. But Dauzat gives: "La *dingue* est la fièvre paludéenne (marsh fever) qui rend *dingot*, c'est-à-dire toqué."

Dinkum.—Australian slang. Adjective meaning good, satisfactory, genuine, excellent or delightful. Among the Australian troops "The Dinkums" were those soldiers who had been in Gallipoli.

Dippy.—Temporarily insane; foolish; unduly simple. E.g. "You're a bit dippy this morning, aren't you?" Perhaps from "dipsomania". (Cf. *Doolally*, *Tapped*, *Touched*.)

Dish Out.—To distribute in equal portions. Cooked food was "dished out" by the orderly men of the day, other rations by the corporal of the section. Sometimes a very argumentative process. Used by officers of an indiscriminate award of decorations. (Cf. *Orderly Man*, *Dixie*.)

Divisional Comic Cuts.—Soldiers' term for cheering communiqués issued from Divisional Headquarters, in which some of the information was known to be false and the rest was suspected—from experience. *Comic Cuts* was (? still is) a cheap humorous periodical for the young.

Divvy.—Division.

Dixie.—A large iron pot, an oval cylinder (if such a thing can be) with an iron lid and a thin handle devised to bite into the hands when carrying. Stew, rice, porridge, soup and tea were boiled in the *dixie*; bacon and biscuit-pudding were cooked in the lid. The most perfunctory cleaning operations, if any, were performed on the *dixie* by the cooks between these boilings and bakings, and

every meal brought ancient memories of its predecessors to the nostrils and the palate. (Cf. *Orderly Man*, *Canteen* and *Bully-Beef*.)

Do.—Noun. An attack or raid. (Cf. *Stunt*, *Show*.) Also, a party or celebration with liquid and other refreshments.

Dock.—Hospital, used only in the phrase *in dock*. The metaphor is taken from the sea, ships going into dock for repairs.

Dodging the Column.—The art and science of avoiding unpleasant and especially dangerous duties. The phrase originated in India and South Africa where a column was a mobile body of troops sent forward into hostile country. (Cf. *Swinging the Lead* and *Wangle*.)

Doings.—A general term, like *oojah* and *cumsah* (cf.) for anything which the speaker is too lazy to mention by its proper name. E.g. "Hand me the doings, will you?" Also, specifically, for the front line, an attack or a bombardment. E.g. "We're going up into the doings to-night."

Dolly.—Nickname for anyone named Gray. From a popular song of the South African War period. (Cf. *Dusty*, *Buck*, etc.)

Doolally.—Mad, insane, not normal. More literally, sunstroke. From *Deolali*, a place in India where mental cases are segregated in hospital. A variation was *doolally tap*, e.g. "Ever since his mate went west, he's been doolally tap." (Cf. *Tapped*, *Touched* and *Dippy*.)

Dough.—Money.

Down.—*To get down to it* meant, to sleep, to lie flat and get under a blanket, generally with the implication—Enough of talking (or wasting time or procrastinating).

*Draft.—A miscellaneous body of men selected from a depôt in England or at the Base abroad to proceed as reinforcements to a unit up the line. Once arrived at its battalion or battery headquarters the *draft* would be split up and absorbed into various subdivisions of the unit. A peculiar awareness of their own impermanent association pervaded *drafts*; old soldiers were cynical and depressed, new soldiers curious and elated, and every *draft* was actuated by intense emotions and —leaving England at least—often by liquor. "We, about to die, salute thee, O Bacchus!"

Draw Crabs.—To attract fire from the enemy artillery by exposing oneself on ground under observation.

*Drum Fire.—A concentrated artillery fire in one sector, the guns of each battery firing not in salvoes but one after another, so that on each target there was always a shell bursting, about to burst or just burst. *Drum* from the continuous *roll* of such a bombardment.

Drum Up.—To make tea in a *canteen* (cf.). Perhaps from the percussive noise made by boiling water.

*Duckboard.—A device for flooring trenches and making foot-tracks across marshy ground. A *duckboard* consisted of two narrow planks about eight feet long, across which were nailed horizontal wooden slats, about eighteen inches to two feet wide. *Duckboards* were most useful, but they were heavy to carry, and they tended to slip under your feet in the dark, so that the loose end rose and hit you violently on the head. Still, they made good firewood (illicit) and roof-props for shelters (semi-illicit).

Duckboard Harrier.—Runner (cf.).

Dud.—A shell which failed to explode. Perhaps from the subdued thud, heavy in itself but so much less than the expected explosion. Also used for an inefficient person. E.g. "The new sergeant's a proper dud on parade."

Duff.—Pudding, especially boiled suet pudding. Also noun from verb = to do a job incompetently.

*Dug-out.—A shelter from shell-fire and the weather, made by digging into the wall of a trench or down from the trench-floor. Dug-outs were of three kinds. *Cubby-holes* dug into the side of the trench, in which one or at most two men could sleep without much comfort. *Shelters*, also dug into the trench wall but rather bigger and shored up with wooden props and corrugated iron. Very often these shelters had no more protection overhead than a layer of sandbags, or even a few duckboards or pieces of corrugated iron. *Deep Dug-outs:* these were a real protection, but their construction was not encouraged except at H.Q. of various kinds. A *deep dug-out* had a shaft with a stairway cut, leading six, ten, or more feet underground into one or more rooms which might be walled with boards and contain wire-netting beds—and even electric light. It was always a great luxury to capture an undamaged German dug-out, even though its entrance faced the wrong way and might admit a shell-burst. The best *deep dug-outs* had at least two entrances, so that if one collapsed, there was still an exit. Among the most famous were the Catacombs, near Armentières, and the Canadian Dug-out near Ypres.

Also a facetious name among officers for an oldish officer returning from retirement to active service and displaying little efficiency.

Dug-out Disease.—Chronic fear of death and danger which kept those, whose rank permitted any choice, safe in their *dug-outs* (cf.).

Dug-out King.—Familiar way of referring to an officer or N.C.O. who took advantage of his rank and office to remain in his dug-out as long as possible. Some of this genus never showed their heads above ground from the moment of entering a trench till it was time to leave. A variation was *dug-out warrior*.

*Dumb Insolence.—A military crime. Allowing a derisive or disbelieving or amused or uninterested expression to appear on one's face when spoken to by a superior officer. An opportunity for exploiting personal dislike which, however, was rarely taken. (Cf. the novelists' phrase: "Silent contempt.")

*Duration.—The duration of the war. Always, of course, until the end, a period unfixed and apparently unlimited. The volunteers of 1914–15 enlisted for "four years or the duration of the war"—an ambiguous phrase which caused endless argument among optimists who expected the end to come each successive year by the following Christmas. "Roll on, Duration", i.e. God end the war and make me a civilian again, was a frequent exclamation in moods of depression.

Dusty.—All men named Miller could be addressed as *Dusty*. (Cf. *Spud*, *Smudger*, etc.)

*Easy.—*To stand easy* was a relaxation on parade. One might move the arms, and talk, and turn the head, but not move away. An *easy* was a period of rest during drill. *Go easy:* a typically English method of protesting against excess of labour,

of speed, of eating or drinking, of swearing, of almost anything. (Cf. *Steady on.*)

*E.F.C.—Expeditionary Force Canteens. Independent of any unit. Huts erected for the sale of groceries, cake, cigarettes, tobacco, etc., at the Base and behind the lines.

*Egg Bomb.—A very small bomb, about the size of an egg. A smart tap on the boot severed a wire and started the ignition before the bomb was thrown. (Cf. *Mills Bomb*, and *Stick Bomb.*)

Eggs and Chips.—Probably the most popular dish in France. Sold in almost all estaminets and eventually in Salvation Army, Church Army, and other refreshment huts behind the lines. So far as is known, a wartime invention due to the scarcity and high prices on one hand of bacon, and on the other of steak. The dish is still to be found on public menus in England and in France. (Cf. *Estaminet.*)

*Elephant.—A small hut of semicircular section, built of curved pieces of corrugated iron, with or without floorboards. Small dug-outs reinforced with such sheets of iron were also sometimes called *elephants*. (Cf. *Nissen* and *Dug-out.*)

*Emergency Rations.—A tin of bully-beef and a few biscuits, carried by every infantryman and officially not to be touched except in emergencies and under special orders. Often called *Iron Rations*. Usually, an infernal nuisance.

Estaminet.—There is no equivalent in this country. An *estaminet* is not a pub. Neither is it a café or a restaurant. It is essentially small, and belongs only to villages and very minor towns. It must have a low roof, an open iron stove and a fug: also wooden benches and table. It must

sell wine, cognac and thin beer, as well as coffee, soup, eggs and chips and omelettes. Moreover, the proprietress (a proprietor is unthinkable—or was? Northern France cannot, after all, have stayed "put"!)—the proprietress must have no objection to tobacco smoke and ribald choruses in English and pidgin French. These are a few of the universal qualities of the *estaminet*. They varied, of course: there were some which were drinking shops and some with "dancing instructresses", some poverty-stricken with the poorest range of viands and drinks. But in general they furnished the jolliest and most heart-warming experience the private soldier met with. (Cf. *Eggs and Chips*.) Often shortened to *staminet*.

ETAPLES.—A small town between Calais and Boulogne, the site of many infantry base depôts and hospitals. The cemetery with its crosses reached to the horizon, and the tented depôts in bad weather were even more depressing. Conditions at *Etaples* were so absurdly repressive that in 1917 a mutiny, provoked by the military police, broke out. The only published account of this will be found in the columns of the *Manchester Guardian* on several dates during February, 1930. For some occult reason, *Etaples* was always pronounced "Ee-tapps", with the accent on the first syllable. (Cf. *Ypres*.)

EYE-WASH.—Official deceit or pretentiousness, especially an appearance of virtue designed to conceal a disgraceful reality. Threats of punishment which could hardly be carried out were *eye-wash*, official reports of battles were *eye-wash*, the Orderly Officer's *Any Complaints* (cf.) was often *eye-wash*. In fact much of the Regular Army's tradition of smartness and bustle came under this heading. The term is perhaps taken

from an oculist's lotion for bathing the eye, which often causes temporary blindness or at least, blurred sight. (Cf. *Hot Air*.)

F.A.—Sometimes lengthened into Sweet F.A. or bowdlerized into *Sweet Fanny Adams* (cf.). Used to mean "nothing" where something was expected. E.g. "Got any fags?"—"Sweet F.A.!"

Fag.—Cigarette. Certain brands of cigarettes, of inferior quality, were issued to the troops at irregular intervals, among the best known being "Red Hussar," "Ruby Queen," "Oros" (usually called "Horrors"), and "Flag." (Cf. *Gasper*, *Smoke*, *Woodbine* and *Issue*.)

Fair Doos.—Justice, especially in sharing out rations, duties, etc. E.g. "Now then, Corp, let's see *all* the butter; fair doos!"

Fanti.—Mad. (From Hindustani.) (Cf. *Doolally*.)

Fashy.—Angry. From the French *fâché*. A variant was *fashy avec*.

Fanny.—A member of "The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry"—a pre-war woman's horsed ambulance unit, which early in the War acquired motor ambulances and sent detachments both to the B.E.F. and to the French Army.

Fanny Adams.—See *F.A.*

*Fatigue.—Chores and other necessary jobs of work. Men on *light-duty* (cf.) were invariably used for fatigues, but everyone had to take his turn. Fatigue included all sorts of employments from peeling potatoes and skinning rabbits to scrubbing huts, from carrying sacks of flour to watering the Colonel's garden in barracks. (Cf. *Sanitary Fatigue*.)

*Fatigue Dress.—Without puttees, belt or equipment, in order to work.

Fed Up.—Disgusted; weary; disillusioned; grumbling; impatient; discontented. A curious phrase of uncertain origin. Often developed into—"Fed up, —— up and far away from home." A constant and recurring state of mind during a war irrational in itself and conducted irrationally.

Female Tank.—See *Tank*.

*Fighting Order.—Same as *Battle Order* (cf.).

Fini Kapout.—French slang used in the same sense as *napoo* (cf.) but not so popular. *Kapout* is the German pronunciation of the Latin *caput*= head. In surrendering to the French Germans would often say, "Kamarade, pas kapout," i.e. Don't shoot, don't kill me! To which the answer was often, perhaps, "Fini kapout." Dauzat gives: "Capout: tué . . . véritable mot passe-partout, qui signifie tour à tour 'fini, abîmé, cassé, tué'." Professor E. Weekley suggests Fr. *capot*.

Fire Alarms.—Arms. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

Flog.—To sell Government property to civilians surreptitiously and, of course, illegally. Rations and blankets were the chief commodities, and Quartermaster-Sergeants were popularly supposed to have large bank deposits as a result of successful and methodical *flogging*.

F.M.O.—Full Marching Order. An unofficial term. (Cf. *Pack*.)

Flying Darts.—Aeroplane darts, falling in numbers with a skimming flight. Used 1914–15.

Flying Pigs.—Trench mortar bombs. (Cf. *Trench Mortar*.)

Fokker.—A distinctive kind of German fighting aeroplane, but often used loosely for any enemy aeroplane. Named after the Dutch inventor.

Footballs.—Trench mortar bombs so called because of their size and shape. (Cf. *Trench Mortar*.)

Foot-slogger.—An infantryman. Grose's *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, 3rd edition, 1796, gives for *foot-warbler*—"a contemptuous appellation for a foot soldier, commonly used by the cavalry." (Cf. the French *pousse-caillou*=a pebble-pusher.) See the Postscript.

For It.—Due for trouble, especially for a visitation of wrath from on high. "All right, my lad, you're for it," meant "You'll be punished." (Cf. *Orders*, *High Jump*, and *On the Mat*.)

*F.P. No. 1.—Field Punishment No. 1. Notorious because part of the punishment consisted in the offender being tied, like one crucified, to a gun-wheel by the wrists and the ankles for one hour in the morning and one in the evening for as many days as were specified up to twenty-eight. This was to humiliate as well as to exhaust him, and his comrades were seemingly expected to jeer at him. It has been stated that some unfortunate men were so lashed to guns *in action*. But generally F.P. No. 1 was administered comparatively rarely, and, by an open conspiracy of humanitarian origin, the period was arranged to fall while the battalion was in the line, so that no punishment at all was possible. Even when it occurred behind the line the lashing to the wheel was generally omitted. The rest of the punishment consisted of *pack-drill* (cf.) and rations of bread and water.

*F.P. No. 2.—Field Punishment No. 2. Not so severe as F.P. No. 1. Lashing to a wheel, for example, was not specified.

Fray Bentos.—The prevalent brand of bully-beef, so that it was often used as a synonym for the whole genus. Also, facetiously, as an approxi-

mation to "très bien," especially in reply to an enquiry about one's health and well-being. "Oh, I'm Fray Bentos." (Cf. *Trez Beans* and *Bully-Beef*.)

Fritz.—Diminutive of *Friedrich*. German soldiers, singly or collectively. After 1915 used much less among private soldiers than *Jerry* (cf.) except in referring to a near-by shell-burst. (Also cf. *Boche*, *Hun*.)

Froggie.—A French soldier. From schoolboy slang and the English amusement at the French habit of eating frog's legs. Sometimes abbreviated to *Frog*. Grose, however, gives *frog-eater*=a Dutchman!

*Front.—The Front in England meant Northern France and Belgium. Across the Channel it meant the forward area, not the front-line trenches especially, but the region within about 30 miles back from them. Used in the Boer (and perhaps earlier) wars, so probably derived from *frontier*. Used in Italian and French 1914–18. Dauzat says that *front* "s'est popularisé aussitôt après l'invasion [allemande de la France], le jour où le front du combat n'a plus coïncidé avec la frontière. L'usage a rapidement déformé le sens stratégigue, en englobant sous ce nom toute la zone des armées, profonde de 50 à 60 kilometres." (Cf. *Line*.)

*F.S.M.O.—Field Service Marching Order. Often qualified to F.M.O.—Full Marching Order or Full Pack Up. (Cf. *Pack*.)

Full Pack Up.—(Cf. *Pack*.)

Funk-hole.—A dug-out or other shelter. No disparagement of the occupants is implied in this term.

Funky Villas.—The village of Fonquevillers.

Furphies. (Cf. *Pferfies*.)

GAME.—"It's a game!" meant, "It's absurd! There's no sense in it." Frequently applied to the war and to the military machine.

GANGWAY FOR A NAVAL OFFICER!—A facetious method of asking for a passage through a group of soldiers, or of announcing *sotto voce* the approach of some self-important officer or N.C.O.

*GAS ALARM.—A horn or an empty shell-case to be struck with a stick. It was a sentry's duty to give the alarm on the advent of gas or gas-shells, when all except the very sceptical put on their respirators. The sound of the Klaxon carried further than that of bulb-horn or shell-case; the Klaxon was the most often used after June, 1917.

GAS-BAG.—Facetious for the cloth bag in which the anti-gas respirator was carried.

GASPER.—A ten-for-sixpence cigarette. A term current almost exclusively among officers.

GERMAN BANDS.—Hands. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

GET AWAY WITH IT.—To commit a transgression of military law and by bluff, impudence, bribery, deceit, blackmail or stealth to escape the proper punishment.

GET 'EM.—To be scared. "Them" probably referred to shaking fits. (Cf. *Windy*.)

GET OFF.—Synonymous with *click* (cf.).

GIPPO.—See *Gyppy* and *Jippo*.

GOING.—Available, e.g. "Is there any rum going to-night, Sergeant?"

*GOLD STRIPES.—Thin gold stripes worn on the lower left sleeve, one for each occasion the wearer had been wounded (*not* for each wound). Instituted in 1916.

Goody-la!—Chinese Labour Corps for "Good!" Taken over by the British for facetious use. (Cf. *Bon.*)

Gone Phutt.—Ceased, collapsed, lost favour, e.g. "I used to get buckshee tea from the sergeant-cook, but that stunt's gone phutt now." Perhaps from the noise made by a suddenly deflated tyre or football. But the *N.E.D.* gives the first use of *phutt* as by Stevens in *With Kitchener to Khartum* (1898) of a shell burst.

Gorblimey.—Field Service caps softened by removing the wire frame. Early in the war a soft cap was issued with earflaps attached; these, when not in use, could be buttoned on top. *Gorblimey* is a Cockney expression and was probably used before the war in ridicule of civilian peaked caps of startling colour and worn at an angle.

Go Up.—Go up the line, i.e. into the trenches. (Cf. *Line.*)

Graft.—Manual labour. Sometimes it was *hard graft.*

Grass-cutters.—Small bombs dropped by aeroplanes on camps and bivouacs behind the lines, bursting on hitting the ground and scattering shrapnel pellets at a low level, i.e. to kill rather than to destroy material things.

*Green Envelope.—A form of envelope not subject to the ordinary regimental censorship. The writer signed a declaration on the outside that the contents gave no information. Green envelopes were issued sparsely and infrequently, but could be obtained in number by bribery or barter.

Greyback.—Soldier's shirt of grey flannel. (N.B.—It was grey all over and through and through, and had sharp-edged *tin* buttons.)

GRIFFIN.—Confidential information, or warning of trouble to come, e.g. "The S.M.'s just given me the griffin about Bill's court-martial." A variation was, *the straight griffin*. Pre-War origin.

GUM BOOTS.—Waders, used in very wet trenches.

GYPPY.—Familiar for native Egyptian Arab. (Cf. *Abdul*, *Johnny*, *Fritz*, *Jerry*, *Pork-and-Beans*, *Froggie*, *Yank*.)

HALF-INCH.—Pinch, i.e. steal. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

HARD SKIN.—A rough, wild-living man.

HARD TACK.—Bully-beef and biscuits eaten uncooked and cold.

HARNESS.—The infantryman's equipment. For the metaphor to be complete, the cart and the load should have been included. Equipment was of two kinds, brown leather and khaki webbing. The web did not cut into the shoulders so much as the leather, but when it got soaked with rain it was considerably heavier.

HATE.—A bombardment, e.g. "The morning hate is due now." An allusion to Lissauer's *Hymn of Hate*, composed in August, 1914.

*H.E.—High Explosive. Shells used for destroying fortifications and trenches, rather than for murder, though they performed this incidental office with great efficiency.

HIGH JUMP.—Used only in the phrase—*For the High Jump*, meaning, due to be tried by the Commanding Officer for some military misdemeanour. (Cf. *Orders* and *Cap off*.)

HIPE.—Rifle. Used in such expressions as, "Where's my hipe?"—"Get your hipes!" or—more often—"Get your bloody hipes!" The word is derived from the parade-ground practice of malforming

words in order to attain an effect of sharpness and authority. One of the forms which "Slope-arms!" took, coming from the mouth of a sergeant or officer, was "Slope-Hipe!" Perhaps it was originally "Slope-Pike!" (Cf. *Bandhook*.)

His.—The enemy's. Used especially of shell bursts and aeroplanes. (Cf. *Ours* and *Jerry*.)

Hitchy-Koo.—Itchy from louse-bites. From the nonsense chorus of one of the earliest "ragtime" songs, pre-war, in which, however, the expression was in no way connected with lousiness.

Hom Forty.—A goods wagon on the French railway, in which troops were moved at an average rate of about 1½ miles an hour. From the inscription on the sliding door: *Hommes* 40, *Chevaux* 8. (N.B.—The horses were an alternative, not an extra, load.)

Hop Over.—Facetious for attack; noun or verb. (Cf. *Over the Top*.)

Hot.—Adjective of intensity, especially of skill or amorous propensity. Used sometimes of an unpleasant sector. (Cf. *Hot stuff*.)

Hot Air.—Loose talk with less significance than is intended by the talker; unfounded rumours; bumptiousness; official phraseology; the whiting on the sepulchre. The origin of the metaphor is apparent when it is remembered that *hot air* rises quickly. (Cf. *Latrine Rumour*.)

Hot Stuff.—A woman willing to forgo the usual sexual reticences in conversation and perhaps in behaviour. But not applied to a professional harlot. The expression was also used of a book, a picture or a theatrical entertainment not blatantly obscene but toying with impropriety. (The journalistic equivalent at the period was

"suggestive"). Also used of any special application of skill, e.g. "He's hot stuff at the piano."

How.—Artillery abbreviation for howitzer.

Hun.—German: singular and plural, adjective and noun. Occasionally applied in the vocative to an unpopular comrade. From a newspaper application of the name of the invaders of the old Roman Empire to the invaders of Belgium and France, after the destruction of Louvain and other mediæval buildings. (Cf. *Boche*, *Fritz*, *Jerry*.)

Iggry.—Hurry up! (from the Arabic *iggri*). The Australians appropriately named a crossing in Bullecourt: Iggry Corner.

Imshi.—Go! Away with you. (Arabic, picked up in Egypt.)

Irks.—R.A.F. slang: "air mechanics" concertina-ed into one syllable.

Iron Foundries.—Heavy shelling.

Iron Rations.—Cf. *Emergency Rations*. Also sometimes used for shells, e.g. "There goes Jerry's iron rations!"

Issue.—Adjective applied to anything officially supplied to the troops, especially to cigarettes, tobacco, etc., which might be bought in canteens and elsewhere. *The issue* was also used for "the whole lot," e.g. "There's no rum tonight. The sergeant's snaffled the issue."

Jacks.—Military Police. (Cf. *Red Caps*.)

Jakes.—Latrine. The word dates back to Elizabethan times.

Jam On It.—Luxury, surplus. Used in the phrase, "What do you want?—Jam on it?" as a

rebuke to one grumbling at his lot or the scantiness of his blessings.

Jam-Tins.—Make-shift bombs made from jam-tins. Used in 1915 in France and Gallipoli, before the Mills bomb came into its own.

Jankers.—*C.B.* (cf.), or confinement in a military prison. Perhaps from the jangling of fetters (in old-time prisons).

Jerk.—"Put a jerk into it" meant, Be quick, hurry! (Cf. *Stuck*.)

Jerks.—Physical training: Swedish exercises and games. Commonly shortened to P.T.

Jerry.—German, singular or plural, noun and adjective. A familiar expression almost of affection, obviously derived from *German*. Used constantly by private soldiers in such phrases "Jerry's damn quiet, to-night": "Poor old Jerry, he's not half getting it from them heavies of ours"; "What should I see but a couple of Jerries."

Jerry Up!—An exclamation of warning (or of faint interest), meaning that a German aeroplane was overhead and might drop bombs. If it was daylight and the 'plane was over, so as to threaten a machine-gun attack, the remarks were wilder and stronger.

Jig-a-Jig.—Copulation, especially illicit or mercenary. Although of United States origin, it may be considered as French slang, used by touts, very often small boys. The favourite phrase was "Jig-a-jig très bon." And then the price was named. The word is onomatopœic. (Cf. *Zig-zag*.)

Jildi.—Quick, look sharp, hurry. Also used in the phrase "on the jildi", e.g. "Get them bags filled on the jildi". (From Hindustani.)

JIPPO.—Juice or gravy, especially of bacon. Greatly prized. Someone from the back of a queue was always to be heard adjuring the orderly men to "steady on the jippo, chum". Sometimes used also for stew, especially among Australians. Transferred use from an obsolete word meaning a scullion.

JOANNA.—Piano. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

JOCK.—A Scottish soldier; or more precisely, a soldier in a Scottish regiment. *Jocks* meant Scottish troops in general.

JOHNSON.—Synonymous with *Coal-box* (cf.). Name given from a negro pugilist, Jack Johnson.

JOHNNY.—Short for *Johnny Turk*. Very rarely for a German. (Cf. *Abdul* and *Jerry*.)

JOY-STICK.—The pilot's controlling lever on an aeroplane. So named because of the thrills its operation could produce.

JUG.—Detention; either a regimental guard-room or a military prison, staffed by military police. (Cf. *Clink*.) Probably from thieves' slang: *stone jug*, meaning stone-walled prison.

JUMP TO IT.—Hurry! Carry out quickly the command given. Used chiefly by N.C.O.'s. (Cf. *Jerk*.)

KAMERAD.—Comrade. A German expression, used by prisoners requesting mercy. Often put to facetious uses by British soldiers among themselves, e.g. "Kamerad!" when a story showed no signs of ending.

KELLY'S EYE.—One, especially a solitary one. A term used in the gambling game of House, in which a number of speculators tried to accumulate a sequence of numbers, shouted out by the

dealer as he drew the corresponding counters from a hat or bag.

*Khaki Blanco.—Blanco was and is a white dressing for canvas and buckskin shoes. A similar dressing for the soldier's web equipment was known absurdly as *khaki blanco*. It was put on wet and allowed to dry.

Kibosh.—A sudden end or punishment. A popular comic song early in the war ran "Belgium put the kibosh on the Kaiser." Also used as a verb.

Kiltie.—A name for a Highland soldier, taken from popular journalism and used only mockingly for the purpose of starting a fight. (Cf. *Jock*.)

Kip.—Noun: sleep or a place to sleep in, e.g. "My kip's round the corner" or "I'm going to have a kip now". Verb: to sleep, e.g. "I'm going to kip here, while the company's on parade." *N.E.D.* gives "a common lodging-house; also a lodging or bed in such a house; hence, a bed in general," and states that the origin of the word is uncertain. (Cf. *Get Down to It*.)

Kirchner.—A French artist, who drew coloured illustrations of young women in lacy lingerie half-exhibiting thighs and breasts in alluring attitudes. Every officer (apparently) collected Kirchner pictures and pinned them—or rather had an orderly pin them—on the walls of billets and dug-outs to cheer his lonely heart. Private soldiers, grosser in thought and conversation, took at the most a passing interest in these libidinous decorations.

Kisser.—The mouth. Used only in abuse or derision, e.g. "I'll give you a wipe (i.e. blow) right acrost yer kisser".

Knapper.—The head. Grose gives "knapper's poll: sheep's head".

KNIFE-REST.—A portable entanglement of barbed wire stretched on an X-shaped frame. Used for stopping gaps in No-Man's Land and in trenches.

KNOCKING-SHOP.—A brothel. Probably from eighteenth-century slang "to knock"=to lie with a woman; or perhaps derived from establishments which endeavoured to conceal their true character and which admitted strangers only in response to a pre-arranged code of knocks. (Cf. *Red Lamp*.)

KNOCK OFF.—To stop work or, used transitively, to steal. (Cf. *Scrounge*.)

*K.R.—King's Regulations. The book of customs, orders of procedure and general routine and ceremonial. Designed to preserve tradition, not to increase efficiency, which was catered for, adequately or not, in various manuals such as *Infantry Training*, *Musketry*, etc.

LANCE-JACK.—Familiar for Lance-Corporal, the lowest rank of N.C.O.—one chevron.

LANDOWNER.—*To become a landowner* meant, to be dead and buried, the grave being the estate.

LATRINE RUMOUR.—Wild and unsubstantial stories and prophecies. These usually took one of the following forms: (1) Rumours about German strategic and tactical plans, new weapons and traps; (2) Changes of High Command, new theatres of war, Napoleonic schemes of victory; (3) Secret doings by one or other of the Allies which would relieve the pressure on the British front; (4) Spy and treason stories; (5) Auguries of a life of comparative ease and luxury in the near future. Some battalions were always about to be moved to India, Egypt or even Samoa; others

were to be employed sweeping the paths of G.H.Q. chateaux. Such rumours became associated with latrines because these shanties were practically the only places (except the grave) in which a private soldier could be comparatively secure from the eye and voice of authority. Consequently men sat there for long periods, reading newspapers, gossiping and exercising their imagination and credulity. (Cf. the scene early in *All Quiet on the Western Front.* British latrines, however, were slightly less open to the public view (only slightly) and not nearly so lugubrious.)

LAUGHING.—Adjective: comfortable, safe, fortunate, especially in contrast with others or with normal circumstances. E.g. "He's got a job at Brigade Head Quarters, so he's laughing"; "Once I get to the C.C.S. I'm laughing."

LEAD-SWINGER.—An habitual malingerer. Often used affectionately and with the faintest suggestion of reproach. E.g. "Lend a hand, you old lead-swinger." (Cf. *Swinging the Lead.*)

LEG.—Show a leg = begin to get up, waken. Bawled by officious N.C.O.s in huts, tents or billets at reveillé.

LEG-SHOW.—A vaudeville entertainment in England at which the members of the chorus exposed their silk-clad legs to considerably above the knee and brandished them at the audience in time with a popular melody. This was considered by the civilian populace to be adequate compensation to any and all soldiers for the horrors of war—and many of the men found it so. Probably no other generation will ever be able to guess at all the excitement and pleasureable atmosphere of naughtiness generated between 1914 and 1918 by the word *legs*—female

legs, of course; the other sort were not considered. At a leg-show of these days you saw far less of the female form than is now exhibited in the streets; the fuss arose simply from the absurdities of women's dress before the war, which led most decent young men to believe that there was something at once romantic and indecent about even a woman's ankles; and to the hysteria of the times.

Lid.—Hat or steel helmet. (Cf. *Tin Hat* and *Battle Bowler*.)

*Light Duty.—When a man reported sick and was obviously ill, but not dying, the M.O. ordered him *Light Duty*. This consisted of fatigues, such as unloading lorries, shovelling coal or carrying heavy buckets of urine. The whole system of *M.D.*, *Light Duty*, etc., broke down in the line. Men seriously ill there were evacuated as soon as possible; those with minor complaints made shift as best they could. A sick man in the line usually did all he possibly could, and was helped through his duties by his mates. It was the absurdity and incessant reiterations of military routine which swelled the sick parades out of the line, at the Base and in England. Men's minds revolted from the constant nagging of parades and duties, and they went sick not to malinger but as a gamble (the odds were usually laid on the M.O.), hoping to break the monotony. (Cf. *Sick*, *M.D.*, *M.O.*)

Linseed Lancers.—Royal Army Medical Corps.

Lip.—Impertinence. (Cf. *Dumb Insolence*, also the civilian slang—"cheek".)

Loaf o' Bread.—Dead. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

Loopy (or Looby).—Silly; slightly insane; unwise; eccentric. According to Grose the eighteenth-

century sense was merely "awkward" or "ignorant", and the word was used as a noun. Soldiers in 1914–18 generally made it an adjective. The word belongs to the North Country. (Cf. *Tap*, *Doolally*, *Touched*.)

Loot.—Lieutenant. E.g. "He's a loot now"; but not "Loot Robinson". Also *Second Loot* or *One-pip Loot*. (Cf. *Pip*.) Officers below the rank of captain were always addressed and spoken of as "Mr. So-and-so". *Mr.* was also a privilege of the *R.S.M.* (cf.).

Lorry Jumping.—The science or art by which small parties or individual soldiers, detached from their units, travelled about France without wearing out their legs. You dodged the A.P.M. and his satellites and got on to a road outside the town or village. Selecting a lonely stretch, you waited. Sooner or later a motor-lorry appeared, which you stopped with civil words (the only politeness ever extended to the A.S.C.) and were taken aboard as unofficial passengers.

Macaroni.—An Italian soldier. (Cf. *Russki*, *Pork-and-Beans*, *Chink*, *Froggie*, *Aussie*, *Yank*.)

Maconachie.—A tinned ration consisting of thin sliced vegetables, chiefly turnips and carrots, and a deal of thin soup or gravy. Warmed in the tin, *Maconachie* was edible; cold, it was a man-killer. But by most soldiers it was regarded as a welcome change from bully-beef. Named after the inventor or manufacturer.

Mafeesh.—There is none: nothing; dead; finished. An Arabic word used in Egypt, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia and Palestine as *napoo* (cf.) was used in France and Belgium.

Mail Up.—A shout of joy and expectation when letters and parcels arrived from home.

*Male Tank.—See *Tank*.

Mate.—Friend, comrade. (Cf. *Chum*.)

Matey.—Friendly. Often used in the admonition or appeal, "Be matey! Lend us a fag."

Matlow.—A sailor. From French "matelot". This was an inheritance from the pre-war Regular Army and not acquired in Northern France. One of the characters in Macdonald's *Patrol* (Collins, 1927) is nick-named "Matlow."

*M.D.—Medicine and Duty. A pill was given to a soldier who reported himself sick, without much cause, together with orders to report to his platoon sergeant for duty (and a cursing). (Cf. *Sick*, *M.O.* and *Light Duty*.)

Mesopolonica.—Rumour always had it in every battalion that the next move would be to the East and comparative ease and safety. In time this hypothetical and unknown destination came to be called *Mesopolonica*—a compound of Mesopotamia and Salonica.

Mespot.—Short for Mesopotamia.

Mess-Tin.—Popular name for a soldier's *Canteen*. (Cf.)

Mike.—To dodge duty or to work half-heartedly.

*Military Police.—See *Red Caps*.

*Mills Bomb.—A bomb serrated like a pineapple to form shrapnel on explosion. The ignition was started by withdrawing a pin and releasing a lever. (Cf. *Stick Bomb* and *Egg Bomb*.)

Minnie.—Minenwerfer. German for Mine (i.e. Bomb) Thrower. (Cf. *Trench Mortar*.)

*M.O.—Medical Officer attached to a battalion or battery. They varied considerably in quality; some were brutes, some were weak underlings of the C.O., some were undoubtedly human. In the line all worked like niggers, and many of them heroically. (Work has always been the cloak to cover the doctor's sins.) But in their treatment of the sick, almost all *M.O.'s* exhibited neither intelligence nor courtesy. Malingerers could "get away with it" (cf.) again and again, genuinely suffering men were ordered back to duty—sometimes to die. As the war progressed and the influential civilians demanded more and more men from the powerless classes, so the medical profession steadily lowered its standards and hurried the deformed, the epileptic and the aged to the shambles. Worse! In 1914 boys were allowed to enlist under age, and finally the minimum age for conscription was fixed at 18, and drafts of thousands of underdeveloped lads were hurried out—almost all into the infantry. Surely the modern Moloch is a scientific god!

Mob.—Battalion or other unit. E.g. "This mob's always on the move." The word itself implied no disrespect; in fact it was almost affectionate. (Cf. *Batt.*)

*Mopping Up.—The capture or subjection of isolated machine-gun posts and other positions after the main body of the attack has passed on. A necessary operation if the assaulting troops were not to be fired on from the rear, and reinforcements shot down. The domestic metaphor for a murderous business is typically English. (Cf. *Pudden-basin.*) *To mop up* was used in another sense for drinking in quantity, e.g. "The new

officer can fairly mop it up, he can". Also varied to *mop it down* (cf. the song, "Here's to the Good Old Beer" (page 40).

Mucking-in.—A method of sharing rations, sleeping quarters and certain duties. Quite informal and arranged by the men themselves. A set of *mucking-in* pals, two, three or four, formed the real social unit of the army. Such a set would receive rations in a lump for all its members and divide them out; it would "brew" its own tea and do its own cooking, when the company cooks provided nothing. And naturally, the members of the set were sworn friends: they would defend each other's property against scroungers, receive letters and parcels for an absent member of the group and—out of the line—drink and feast together. The practice has been brilliantly exemplified in *Her Privates We* (Davies, 1930).

Napoo.—Finished; empty; gone; non-existent. Corrupted from the French *Il n' y en a plus* = there's no more, given in answer to enquiries for drink, when the estaminet keeper expected officers or colonial troops who would pay more. From this the word came to be used for all the destructions, obliterations and disappointments of war, e.g. "The bread's napoo"; "The S.M.'s napoo"; "Napoo rum." (Cf. *Fini Kapout.*) Also as verb.

N.B.G.—No bloody good.

Next of Skin.—Next of kin: who had to be named by a soldier on enlistment and in his field service pay book, as the person to whom all effects and moneys due should be sent if the soldier died.

Night Ops.—Night operations: a part of training that was half romantic and half burlesque, but never realistic.

*Nissen.—A small rectangular hut, of wood or corrugated iron, or both. Named presumably after the inventor. (Cf. *Elephant.*)

Nix.—Nothing. From the German *nichts*. Used also by French soldiers, with a variant *nib*.

Nobby.—All men named Clark were by long tradition known as *Nobby*. (Cf. *Darky.*)

No Bon.—Cf. *Bon*.

No Goody-la.—Cf. *Goody-la*.

*No Man's Land.—A strangely romantic name for the area between the front line trenches of either army, held by neither but patrolled, at night, by both. Originally used, according to Farmer-and-Henley and Weekley, for waste ground, barren stretches between two provinces or kingdoms. Defoe in *Robinson Crusoe* uses it to signify "a border". The *N.E.D.* notes that an official Roll of A.D. 1320 (written of course in Latin) contains *nonesmanneslond*. Defoe spells it *no Man's Land*, T. Hughes in 1881 *noman's land*, and Dilke in 1890 *no-man's land*.

Non-stop.—A shell that has passed well overhead.

North.—North and South, i.e. mouth. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang.*)

Not Half.—Pre-war cockney, but soon spread all over working-class England. Used in all kinds of connections to express emphasis. "Not 'alf I didn't mop it up" = "I drank as much as I could." The answer "Not 'alf!" given in response to "Are you coming out to-night" means "Yes, I am; certainly and gladly." (Cf. *You bet.*)

*Number Nine.—Cf. *Sick*.

Nut.—A man, especially a young man, paying great attention to his appearance and to dressing in

the fashion of the moment. Pre-war civilian slang.

ODDS.—*To shout the odds*, meant to brag or threaten in a loud voice. Anyone who has ever heard a hullaballoo of racecourse bookmakers will understand the derivation of the phrase

ODDS AND SODS.—"Details" attached to Battalion Headquarters for miscellaneous offices: batmen, sanitary men, professional footballers and boxers on nominal duties, etc.

*OFF DUTY.—Those periods, brief, uncertain and terminable at a moment's notice, when a private soldier was free to amuse himself as he pleased: with certain reservations, such as that he might not appear with his hands in his pockets or a tunic button unfastened or his hat off or without puttees; that he might not wander beyond certain strictly-defined limits or ask for a drink in "Officers Only" establishments or omit to salute any and every officer within sight. In practice, of course, one soon grew used to these prohibitions and obeyed them without thinking (or else found ways of evading them and the proper punishment). For a limited period and for a specific purpose (i.e. to win the war) one could easily undertake such a slavery. As a normal routine, it is unthinkable.

OFF IT.—To die. (Cf. *Packet* and *West*.)

*O'GRADY.—A mythical personage who said things. *O'Grady* was a favourite game organized by Physical Training instructors to relieve the monotony of exercises. Various orders were shouted, but only those preceded by the phrase *O'Grady says* had to be obeyed. Those men who failed to discriminate properly were made to run

violently to a distant point and back. The game may sound too simple to deceive even a ploughboy, but when one has devoted years to acquiring habits of moving the body smartly in response to certain orders, it requires real restraint not to obey those orders when they are bawled with authority.

Oil.—*The oil* meant "The truth," i.e. the real thing. Probably from prospectors in the oil-fields. "Is that the oil?" meaning, "Is it authentic?" Originally and largely Australian slang.

Oil-Cans.—Trench Mortar Bombs, from their shape. (Cf. *Trench Mortar*.)

Old Bean.—Familiar form of address, indicating affection. No meaning. Almost certainly derived from the musical comedy dude, perhaps by extension of *old man*, "old" always evoking a feeling of affection and respect. (Cf. French *mon vieux* and *vieille branche*.)

Old Soldier.—One grown old in sin. A term of mingled admiration and indignation, implying cunning in the art of dodging work and trouble from authority, to the point of malingering. A typical usage: "Is Bill coming on the ration party?" "Not him, the old soldier."

Old Sweat.—A soldier with considerable service and therefore an accumulation of cunning; especially a *time-serving* (cf.) man.

O My.—Short for "Oh my Gawd," i.e. sword. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

One of the Boys.—*To be one of the boys* or *one of the lads* was to be popular, cheerful and debonair.

On the Mat.—To be tried by the Commanding Officer for a minor offence. A mat was often laid before the table at which the C.O. sat, and

on this the offender stood at attention. (Cf. *Orders*, *Cap off* and *High Jump*.)

On the Never.—To get anything *on the never* was to get it without the proper payment, either by credit or by *wangling* (cf.). Perhaps a contraction from *on the never-pay system*.

O. Pip.—Signalese for O.P., i.e. Observation Post. (Cf. *Pip Emma*.)

Ooja.—Or, in full, ooja-cum-pivvy. A military equivalent for "thingamytite"; a word substituted when the proper name cannot be remembered; or, for the mere fun of using the fantastic syllables, when it is perfectly well known, e.g. "I saw the S.M. going into the ooja-cum-pivvy down the road"—an estaminet being implied and understood. Variant: *ooja-ka-piv*.

*Orderly.—A soldier accompanying an officer on an inspection or otherwise detailed for special duties. A man-servant in a hospital, hospital-train or Casualty Clearing Station.

Orderly Buff.—Variation of *Orderly Man* (cf.).

*Orderly Corporal.—Similar to *Orderly Sergeant* (cf.).

*Orderly Man.—Two men from each platoon were appointed each day, by rota or by caprice of the sergeant, to do the odd jobs of tidying and cleaning the platoon's quarters. Their most important function was to fetch the platoon's food at meal-times and distribute it. (Cf. *Dixie*, *Mess-tin*, *Dish-out*.)

*Orderly Officer.—An officer selected by rota to perform certain inspections and other duties, relating to the whole battalion, for a period of twenty-four hours. The most the men knew about the *Orderly Officer* was that he inspected the guard for the day and visited all platoons during

dinner. All this, of course, out of the line. (Cf. *Complaints*.) Among officers : *Orderly Dog*.

*Orderly Room.—The administrative office of a unit. Here also *Orders* (cf.) were held.

*Orderly Sergeant.—Selected by rota for twenty-four hour duties, roughly parallel to those of *Orderly Officer* (cf.).

*Orders.—The daily trial (not usually continued in the line) by the Commanding Officer of a battalion or other unit, of minor offences. So called because the punishments were listed the next day in Battalion Orders, displayed outside the Orderly Room. (Cf. *Cap Off* and *High Jump*.)

Ours.—British or allied. (Cf. *His*.)

Outfit.—A battalion or other unit. (Cf. *Mob*.)

Over the Bags.—*Bags* here is *sandbags*. (Cf. *Over the Top* and *Hop Over*.)

Over the Top.—To leave the shelter of a trench in order to make an assault, troops had to hoist themselves over the front wall of sandbags (the parapet). It was entering another world (and often literally, for the unlucky ones), an abrupt and absolute change to another sort of warfare. Thus *over the top* became a synonym for an attack. The phrase was originally *over the top and the best of luck*, but as it became increasingly obvious that there was no luck in frontal assaults, the latter half of the phrase was dropped. (Cf. *Hop Over*.)

*Pack.—Used in two senses, to mean either all the infantryman's equipment which he carried on his back, i.e. ammunition pouches, haversack, valise, water-bottle, with their contents, as well as his entrenching tool, bayonet, rifle, gas-mask, etc.; or else, the valise (or knapsack) with its contents

alone. Various estimates have been given of the weight carried by the British infantryman on the march from fifty-three to seventy pounds. In practice, it was much more than this. The rifle alone weighed nine pounds and in winter there was the additional weight of heavy underclothing and leather or fur jerkin. The steel helmet and the gas-mask were other additions. And going into the line, there would be extra ammunition, extra rations, bags of bombs, sandbags and often picks and shovels, wire and picquets, of which every man had to carry a considerable share. It is rarely understood that the war was fought by men who were always tired, because they got little and disturbed sleep in the line, and because they were, day in and day out, weighed down by appalling physical burdens. All this apart from the dangers and discomforts. Officers carried no *packs*, though some formed the prudent habit of disguising themselves as private soldiers with a rifle and a "skeleton" equipment. But many of them helped the weaker men by relieving them of part of the load—unofficially, of course.

*Pack-Drill.—Drill in full marching order performed continuously at high speed under the direction of a Provost Sergeant. This was carried out only as a punishment, and an exceptionally severe one at that. (Cf. *F.P. No.* 1.)

Packet.—*To cop a packet* meant sometimes to be fatally wounded, sometimes simply to be wounded. But *Blighty* or *Blighty one* was usual for a non-fatal wound. *Cop*, of course, is Cockney for "to catch" (cf. copper=a policeman). The literal reference of *packet* was perhaps the missile, perhaps the gauze and lint of the First Field Dressing which the wounded man or his friends

would apply to the wound. Sometimes abbreviated to *cop it.* (Cf. *West.*)

*Padre.—Chaplain. From the Portuguese and Spanish *Padre*—Father, priest. This word came from our Portuguese connections in India in the eighteenth century. A chaplain had few definite duties: he could make himself useful or he could slack. In general, it may be said that all Roman Catholic *padres* were respected, because they came into the line and because they lacked the haw-haw voice. Church of England and Nonconformist *padres* could be roughly divided into three classes: (1) The man-of-the-world who swore and over-drank; despised and disliked; (2) The earnest but ineffectual; despised but tolerated; (3) The spiritual but determined, who made himself useful as a first-aid man and distributor of cigarettes; this sort was respected as a person, but not as a parson. Men would even say, "A pity old So-and-so's a padre; he's not a bad sort." C. R. Benstead's *Retreat* (Methuen, 1930), gives a melodramatic account of an ultra parsonical *padre.* Edward Thompson's *These Men Thy Friends* (Knopf, 1927) is a much better book and a more reliable guide to the ways of *padres.* See also Chapter V in C. E. Montague's *Disenchantment* (Chatto and Windus, 1922).

Pal.—Friend, comrade. Not used in vocative unless with *old.* (Cf. *Chum.*)

*Part-Worn.—Clothing which had been worn previously by another soldier, deceased, sick or otherwise having no use for it. If *part-worn* kit were thrust on one, it could usually be exchanged later by a judicious bribe to the Q.M.'s clerk.

*Pass.—A form signed by a commanding officer stating that the soldier who held it had per-

mission to travel to such and such a place from this date to that. Without a *pass*, a soldier "out of bounds" was liable to be arrested by the military police. Another personal liberty gone.

PAHNY.—Water. (Hindustani.)

P.B.I.—Poor Bloody Infantry. Very rarely used by infantry *during* the War, but many books have been written since to explain why the name arose. Sometimes used by the artillery and *The Wipers Times*.

PEDLAR.—Nickname applied to any man named Palmer. From a pugilist. (Cf. *Tug*, *Spud*, etc.)

PEG.—*To be on the peg*, alternative to *on the mat* (cf.).

PFERFIES.—Rumours. Australian slang, perhaps a composite "made" word from "Murphies" and "potatoes," i.e. suggesting the vividness of the Irish imagination. Fraser and Gibbons spell it Furphies, from the name of the maker of sanitary carts at a Melbourne camp in 1914, when the destination of the A.I.F. was still unknown, and rumours abounded.

*P.H. HELMET.—One of the earlier forms of anti-gas mask; a bag made of flannel soaked in chemicals. Mercifully superseded by the box-respirator.

*PICQUETS.—Wooden stakes or spirals of iron driven into the ground to support barbed wire entanglements.

PIECE.—A girl; a wench. Used in this sense as far back as the eighteenth century. Probably originally a euphemism. Vulgar, but not necessarily obscene. (Cf. *Square-pusher*, *Tart*, *Skirt*.)

PIGGY-STICK.—The wooden helve for the entrenching tool which the infantry man carried next his bayonet; very useful in a *rough house* (cf.). From a child's game, tip-cat, in which a chip of wood is tipped into the air and then hit, all by a stick.

PIG'S EAR.—Beer. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang.*)

PILL-BOX.—A small fortification of reinforced concrete used especially for machine-guns. A German invention.

PINCH.—To steal. Common slang taken over from civilian life. It obviously arises from the action of the thief's fingers closing on his prize. (Cf. *Snaffle*, *Half-inch*, *Scrounge.*)

PINEAPPLE.—German mortar-bomb with a wind-vane.

PIP.—The star, in cloth or gilt, worn on the sleeve or on the shoulder-strap by a second-lieutenant. A lieutenant wore two, a captain three. Above that rank, a crown was worn until, with generals, there were various gilt devices of crossed batons, all looking much the same to a private soldier who saw a general once in a blue-moon and then only in passing. Current slang referred to company officers as *one-pippers* or *two-pip merchants*, *artists* or *wallahs*. Junior officers became casualties in an attack in such numbers that a popular saying was—"one star, one stunt" (i.e. attack).

PIP EMMA.—Signalese for p.m. It was often difficult to pass messages accurately over a field telephone, and in order to differentiate similar sounds the signallers devised a system by which A became ack, B—beer, D—don, M—emma, P—pip, S—esses, T—toc, V—vic. This pronunciation was often taken up into the ordinary soldier's vocabulary. A Trench Mortar Battery would be referred to, for example, as a Toc Emma Beer.

PIPPED.—*To be pipped* meant to be hit, especially by a bullet.

PIP-SQUEAK.—Properly, gas-shell. Loosely, whizz-bang.

PLATES OF MEAT.—Feet. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang.*)

Plink-Plonk.—Facetious for *vin blanc* (cf.). Variants were *plinkety-plonk*, *blink-blonk*.

Plug.—To shoot. Used only transitively and generally of a rifle. Occasionally, "hit, strike with fist." Abbreviated metaphor—to plug with lead.

Plugstreet.—English approximation to Ploegsteert, a wood in Belgium. (Cf. *Etaples* and *Ypres*.)

Plum Puddings.—Trench Mortar Bombs. (Cf. *Trench Mortar*.)

Poilu.—Déchelette defines: "Soldat [français] de la Grande Guerre, c'est à dire gars à poil." D. says that the word became popular almost from the beginning of the War, that it had been used as "a soldier" by Rabelais and Balzac, and that "hair has always passed as the mark of courage, of manly strength"; and he adds that this is the real origin—not the fact that in the first months of the War the soldiers had, of necessity, let the hair grow on their faces. He notes that during the War it was more used at the rear than at the front, and at the front only by officers and non-coms.

Dauzat in *L'Argot de la Guerre*, 1918, 2nd ed. 1919, has several pages on this word. Note the following extracts:—

'C'est l'homme qui a du poil au bon endroit,—non pas dans la main! [which means slothful, enervated],—symbole ancien de virilité".

"*Poilu* existe depuis un siècle au moins dans notre argot militaire." [Balzac used it in *Le Médecin de campagne*, 1834], "on le voit, le mot n'était encore qu' adjectif à cette époque. Plus tard, et jusqu'à la veille de la guerre actuelle, il désigna, dans les casernes où prédominait l'élément parisien et faubourien, soit l'homme d'attaque qui n'a pas froid aux yeux [i.e. who

has plenty of guts, who doesn't get the wind up], soit l'"homme' [i.e. soldier] tout court?"

"Plusieurs années avant la guerre, l'ouvrier parisien appelait plaisamment un homme quelconque [i.e. mediocre] un *poilu*." "Le civil, depuis 1914, a donné une nouvelle valeur au mot: le *poilu* est désormais le soldat combattant (qui s'oppose à l'"embusqué')."

French soldiers didn't particularly like the word: they called themselves "les hommes" or "les bonhommes".

Poop Off.—To fire a big gun (*not* a rifle).

Pop.—Short for *Poperinghe*, a town behind the line in Belgium, offering many amenities to troops on rest.

Pork and Beans.—Facetious approximation to Portuguese, who had a small army in France. *Pork and Beans*, with very little pork, if any, was a staple part of Army rations. (Cf. *Macaroni*, *Russki*, *Chink*, *Aussie*, *Froggie*, *Yank*.)

Posh.—Bright; neat; smart; best in quality and appearance. Adjective: probably abbreviated from "polish." Used chiefly of clothes, but also of persons, e.g. "That's a posh new tunic you've got," or "Proper posh you are to-night." Farmer and Henley give *posh*: a dandy. (Cf. *Square-pushing*.)

Posh Up.—Verb: to smarten one's appearance. (Cf. *Posh*.)

Possy.—Position. Also used for a dug-out or bivouac.

Pozzy.—Jam. Derivation still untraced. In the first years of the War only one form of jam was available—plum and apple. This became a standard grumble, and later other kinds were supplied, chiefly doubtful mixtures such as gooseberry

and rhubarb. Tins also were replaced by cardboard cylinders. To the end an issue of strawberry or raspberry jam was an historic occasion.

POZZY-WALLAH.—A man inordinately fond of jam.

PROMENADE.—A stroll. A favourite opening to a conversation with a young French woman was, "Mademoiselle, promenade avec moi ce soir?" Very rarely a serious invitation: mere raillery.

PROPER.—Very, or very good. Taken from cultured English into the vernacular without any precise sense of its meaning and used as a vague intensive. "He's a proper swine, the new sergeant"; or, alternatively, "He's proper matey." (Cf. *Chronic.*)

*PROVOST SERGEANT.—An N.C.O. attached to Battalion Headquarters and responsible for the care of offenders and accused men in the guard-room. In charge of the *Regimental Police* (cf.). (Also cf. *Pack Drill.*)

P.T.—Physical Training. (Cf. *Jerks.*)

PUDDEN-BASIN.—Steel-helmet. (Cf. *Tin Hat* and *Battle Bowler.*)

PULL-THROUGH.—Facetious name for a very tall and thin soldier. Literally, a cord for cleaning the barrel of a rifle.

PUKKA.—Real, genuine, correct, smart, soldierly, e.g. "That's a *pukka* Quarter Bloke we've got now." (From Hindustani *pakkha.*)

PUMP SHIP.—To urinate. Metaphor from sailor's slang.

PUSH.—An attack in force, by several infantry divisions working in co-operation. The word first became popular, perhaps through journalism, in 1916, and *The Big Push* was the general name

at that time for the first British assaults on the Somme. The word indicates the desired ideal rather than the actuality. (Cf. *Stunt*, *Show*.)

PUSHER.—(See *Square-Pusher*.)

PUSHING UP DAISIES.—Dead—and buried.

PUT IT ACROSS.—Cf. *Slip it Across*.

QUARTER BLOKE.—The Quartermaster, an officer usually commissioned from the ranks of the Regular Army and approaching (or ensconced in) middle age. Occasionally used loosely for the Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant. Both men were responsible for providing supplies of food, clothing, etc., for the whole unit and distributing them to the Company Quartermaster-Sergeants. It is possible (one must be open-minded) that there were some honest men among the Q.M.s, but the case has never been proved.

QUIFF.—Carefully brushed and oiled hair, especially that part of it swept across or back from the temples. From Middle English and French *coif*: head-dress.

RAGTIME.—Literally, music written in syncopated time. Now superseded by *jazz*. The troops used *ragtime* as an adjective for any special form of inefficiency or absurdity, e.g. "Oh, it's a ragtime camp, this is," or "We've got a ragtime sergeant now".

*R.A.M.C.—Royal Army Medical Corps, responsible for the transport of wounded behind the lines and the organization of hospitals. Often called the *Rob All My Comrades*, because the private effects and souvenirs of an unconscious

or sleeping man would sometimes disappear on the way to hospital, never to be recovered. (Cf. *Ally Sloper's Cavalry*.)

RAZZLE.—To be or go on the razzle=to make an expedition in search of entertainment and pleasure, to spend money. Not necessarily to get drunk. (Cf. *Binge*.)

RED CAPS.—Military Police. So called because they wore a sort of lid of red flannel over the top of their khaki caps. The most hated and despised men in France. Employed sometimes for the regulation of traffic, but chiefly to walk about the streets, examine passes, bully private soldiers, arrest absentees and generally exhibit truculence and self-satisfaction. They were also employed to staff military prisons and by all accounts revelled in the secret opportunities for cruelty which the job gave them. Red Caps were not usually drawn from the civil police; the job was voluntary and no decent man would undertake it if he realized what it implied. For comments typical of the private soldier's view of *Red Caps* see *War is War*, by A. M. Burrage (Gollancz, 1930). (Cf. also *Battle Police* and *Etaples*.)

RED LAMP.—A brothel, licensed and under police surveillance. A red bracket lamp outside was the recognized sign. (Cf. *Knocking Shop*.)

REGIMENTAL.—Proper noun; short for Regimental Sergeant-Major, of whom there was only one to each battalion, superior in rank to the four Company Sergeant-Majors. E.g. "The Regimental's tight again!" Used as an adjective, *regimental* meant excessively disciplinarian, enforcing every regulation in every detail. E.g. "Up the line you don't hear a word from him, but when we come out he's too bloody regimental for words."

*Regimental Police.—Not *Red Caps* (cf.), but a few men appointed chiefly to watch bounds and escort prisoners. Usually amenable to quite small bribes. There were also Brigade Police, who performed similar duties.

*Registering.—Experimental shots by the artillery, of which a record was kept, so that concentrated fire could be directed on the target when necessary with a certainty of doing damage. (Cf. *Bracketing*.)

*Relief.—The man who replaced a sentry on duty, allowing him to retire for a short rest: or the process of replacement. In this sense, an old military term, used in the opening scene of Hamlet ("For this relief, much thanks"). Also used for the process whereby a new battalion or company filed into the front line trenches and took over the duty of holding them.

*Rest Camps.—Camps behind the lines where troops returning weary from the line were harried with incessant parades and brass-polishing. Also used ironically for cemeteries.

Rhyming Slang.—The private soldiers of the pre-War Regular Army had a most intricate system of slang in which a word was referred to obliquely by means of another word or phrase rhyming with it. Rhyming slang is also found among Cockneys, and probably is, in origin, a device of thieves and other petty criminals for talking about their misdoings without incriminating themselves. The rhymes chosen, oddly enough, often indicate a religious upbringing or the memory of innocent nursery rhymes, e.g. "Buckle-my-shoe" for "Jew", "Cain and Abel" for "table," etc. (Cf. *Half-inch*, *Tit-for*, etc.)

Righto.—Yes; Yes, I'll do it; or, Quite correct.

Rooky.—A recruit. Corruption of *recruit*. Regular Army.

Rooty.—Bread. Urdu *roti*. Sala in 1883 records he heard it used by a private about 1875.

Rooty Medal.—Long Service medal, i.e. earned by eating army rations for a number of years.

Rough House.—A general fight or disorder, arising from an argument, boasting or liquor. So called from public-houses in which such rows were frequent. Occasionally used as a verb.

*R.T.O.—Railway Transport Officer. Very often an officer recovering from wounds or sickness. There was an *R.T.O.'s* office in almost every station of any importance behind the lines, and it was his business to facilitate (a word of delightful vagueness) the transport of troop trains, and to assist parties of soldiers rejoining their units from leave, hospital or a *course* (cf.). When a battalion was on the move, it was often very difficult to rejoin it, and returning soldiers might easily and deliberately spend a week or more in short railway trips, a delightful holiday rich with new scenes and an air of personal freedom otherwise unknown in the Army. You caught the wrong train, or at least missed the right one, and then persuaded the *R.T.O.* to date-stamp your pass, so that the *Town Major* (cf.) would give you a night's billet and a day's rations. As most *R.T.O.'s* were as ignorant as yourself of the location of any troops at all, and did not care where you went so that you passed out of their hands, these "excursions" were rarely missed by soldiers of any experience.

Rubber Gun.—A big gun firing at a very long range.

Run.—To bring a soldier up before his commanding officer and charge him with some offence. E.g. "Let them spades alone or I'll run yer."

RUN.—To have the enemy *on the run* meant to force him to retreat continually, so that his sense of stability was lost. Metaphor from boxing.

*RUNNER.—A private soldier employed for bearing verbal or written messages between a platoon and Company Headquarters (*platoon runner*), between C.H.Q. and Battalion Headquarters (*company runner*), or between B.H.Q. and Brigade Headquarters (*battalion runner*). Runners were especially in demand when telephonic or telegraphic communication broke down, i.e. when shelling and machine-gun fire were heavy. Consequently the job, though it offered relief from normal routine, was a very dangerous one.

RUSH.—*How much did they rush you?* meant "How much did you have to pay?" Anyone who studies the method of certain salespeople will appreciate the force of the word *rush* in this connection.

RUSSKI.—A Russian soldier. (Cf. *Macaroni*, *Pork-and-Beans*, *Chink*, *Froggie*, *Aussie*, *Yank*.)

SAÏDA.—Good day! greeting! Arabic, from Egypt, where so many English and Colonial troops were stationed at one time or another. Arabic terms were very frequently used by Australians and New Zealanders and by the Regulars.

SAN FAIRY ANN.—An extremely popular phrase, approximated into English from the French *ça ne fait rien*—It doesn't matter, it makes no difference, why worry? As the intelligence of the soldier penetrated year after year the infinite layers of bluff and pretentiousness with which military tradition enwrapped the conduct of the War, so his cynicism increased, became habitual. Men ceased to show initiative, not so much

because they were dispirited by war, but because they realized that the stupidity of authority was impregnable. Neither virtue, courage nor skill were demonstrably of any avail to protect a man from the quite impersonal violence of shells or bullets, from the malignance of a biased superior or from unnecessary and dangerous duties carried out by order from above. Naturally he adopted a fatalism comparable to that of the Moslem murmuring his enervating "Maalish"—It does not matter. Let the Quartermaster make an income from surreptitiously vended food and clothing, let the Divisional General order a hopeless raid in order to win a C.M.G. for himself, let Johnny Cold Feet wangle a cushy job at the Base, let anything happen, the only appropriate comment was—*San Fairy Ann*.

Naturally, the phrase had its lighter uses, especially in defiance of the warnings of friends. It was so much used that variants were almost as popular—chiefly *San Fairy* and *San Fairy Anna*.

*Sanitary Fatigue.—One of the most unpopular duties in the Army, except with a few peculiar souls who wangled it permanently as a cushy job. It included the digging of latrine-trenches and the emptying of the buckets; the burial of dung and urine; and the disinfection, in the line, with chloride of lime of places where old corpses were unearthed. (Cf. *Fatigue*.)

Sarnt.—A smart and soldierly pronunciation of sergeant. Only used before the N.C.O.'s surname, e.g. "Sarnt Smith," but "Here's the Sergeant." Also in *Sarnt-Major*, but here it could be used without the surname.

Sausage.—An observation balloon, hoisted and lowered by cable behind the lines. Usually applied only to German balloons.

Scoff.—To eat: also, as a noun, any sort of food.

Scrounge.—To steal, not personal belongings, but from a department or some other embodiment of authority. More army property changed hands in France by *scrounging* than by legitimate means. One *scrounged* food, clothing, firewood and lost articles from one's equipment. The unfortunate loser cursed a little, and then promptly set out to replace his loss by *scrounging* from someone else. In this way, a certain platoon once removed a whole elephant hut from a number of sleeping engineers. This feat in time became legendary. Also used intransitively *to scrounge about*, i.e. to go seeking an opportunity of stealing, either a particular article or whatever fortune offered. From North Country dialect. Joseph Wright's *Dialect Dictionary* gives as a secondary meaning—"To wander about idly," and, for the noun, "a thorough search." (Cf. *Pinch*, *Snaffle*, *Half-inch*.)

Scrounger.—See *Scrounge*. An adept at the art. Used as both insultingly and admiringly.

Service.—*To sling one's service about*. To boast about past martial experience.

Seven.—*It's all in the seven*, a philosophic exclamation used by Regular soldiers who had enlisted for seven years with the colours (i.e. on continuous day-to-day service). It meant, "I was a fool to enlist and now I've got to stick it."

*Shelter.—See *Dug-out*.

Shirty.—Angry, malicious, fighting-mad. From the habit of certain sorts of men who would, on small provocation, begin to remove their shirts as an indication that they would fight. An excellent example of this kind of fight will be found in Philip Macdonald's *Patrol* (Collins, 1927).

*Shock Troops.—Battalions, brigades or divisions selected to lead an attack and be the first to enter the enemy trenches.

"Short Arm" Inspection.—Conducted periodically by the M.O., to detect symptoms of venereal disease. A platoon of men would be lined up, without privacy, in a hut. The soldiers' name is derived, by obvious analogy, from the parade inspection of rifles. Another example of the degrading slavery to which the necessities of war compelled decent, reticent men to submit. It seems incredible now.

Short Hairs.—"To have a man by the short hairs" meant to possess an advantage over him or to be in a position to prevent his punishing you if he were your superior, e.g. "He daren't bring me up for orders because he's trying to dodge the Colonel just now. So I've got him by the short hairs." From the hairs at the back of the neck, very painful if plucked.

Show.—A theatrical entertainment of the lighter sort. Hence, also, an attack, promoted (it often seemed) for the amusement of the Staff and newspaper magnates. A similar use of the word occurs in the phrase—*to put up a good show:* to fight a losing battle well; to acquit oneself honourably. (Cf. *Stunt, Push.*)

*Sick.—When a soldier was, in his own opinion, so ill that he was unable to perform his duties, he *went sick* by giving his name to the orderly corporal and reported the next morning very early for *sick parade*. The regimental Medical Officer saw him in his turn, asked him a question or two, invariably gave him a standardized purgative pill, known as Number 9, and marked him down as *M.D.*, i.e. medicine and duty, *Light Duty* or *Excused Duty*. Malingerers were re-

ported for punishment, if the M.O. were sufficiently sure of his diagnosis; those who were unable to hold themselves upright were—in time—removed to an ambulance. But everyone got a Number 9. (Cf. *M.O.* and *M.D.*)

*Sick Parade.—Cf. *Sick*.

*S.I.W.—Self-Inflicted Wound. A most serious crime committed only by men temperamentally or physically unfitted for the line, or men so overstrained by service that they were no longer responsible for their actions. Many cases of *S.I.W.* were camouflaged by sympathetic superiors, but far from all. There were several special *S.I.W.* hospitals at the Base, where conditions were said to be severe to the pitch of persecution. (See Chap. IX, Sect. 4, A. P. Herbert's *The Secret Battle* (Methuen 1919), and "The Coward" in A. D. Gristwood's *The Somme* (Cape, 1927).)

Skint.—Skinned, meaning: having lost or spent all one's money.

Skipper.—Officer's slang for a captain commanding a company; but not used as a prefix.

Skirt.—A young woman. An obvious example of metonymy. (Cf. *Tart*, *Piece*, *Square-pusher*.)

Skrim-Shanker.—Malingerer. (Cf. *Malinger* and *Sick*.) Pre-war.

Slacks.—Trousers, especially without puttees. Chiefly an officers' term. (Cf. *Fatigue Dress*.)

Slip it Across.—*To slip it across a man* meant, to hit him or else to reprimand him severely.

S.M.—Sergeant-Major. Always introduced by "the", without the surname. Otherwise, the rank was given in full. Used only of Company Sergeant-Majors. (Cf. *Regimental*.)

SMOKE.—Any sort of cigarette. (Cf. *Fag*, *Gasper* and *Woodbine*.)

SMUDGER.—Nickname applied to any man named Smith. (Cf. *Darky*, *Pedlar*, etc.)

SMUTTY.—Obscene, especially sexually obscene. The word was almost always used of words, spoken or written. The use of this word, and of *dirty*, in this sense, is a significant indication of a subconscious sense of shame even in the most degraded men. Of course, the words were often misapplied to quite decent subjects, e.g. "nudes" in art galleries.

SNAFFLE.—To steal. In eighteenth-century slang a "snaffler" was a highwayman. (Cf. *Pinch*, *Half-Inch*, *Scrounge*.)

SNOB.—A soldier employed, in the Army, in cobbling.

SNUFF IT.—To die, not specially to be killed. From the old method of putting out candles.

SOCK.—Put a sock in it (i.e. the mouth) was a vivid and peremptory method of telling a man that he had talked too long, especially if he were complaining. See the Postscript.

*SOLDIER'S FRIEND.—A well-known brand of brass polish—a pink tablet on which one spat to produce a paste. Used for cleaning buttons, badges, etc. The manufacturer's name misinterprets the soldier's attitude to the commodity.

*S.O.S.—The extreme appeal for help. Used by ships at sea since before the War, the three letters being very distinctive in the Morse code. The same combination would be used over the field telegraph by troops in great danger. But in such emergencies wires were often cut and the signal was given by rockets in a previously-arranged combination of colours. On perceiving an *S.O.S.* rocket group from the front line the

artillery would know that the enemy was attacking or raiding, or about to do so, and would immediately begin to concentrate heavy fire on his front trench. Sentry-work being nervy work, especially for tired men, *S.O.S.* rockets were usually entrusted only to officers and Company Sergeant-Majors. (Cf. *Very Light* and *Three Blue Lights.*)

Souvenir.—Keepsake: which old English word it completely displaced, partly because *souvenir* could be used without sentimental associations, partly because it was *à la mode* to be French in France. All sorts of things were collected as *souvenirs*, especially pickelhaube helmets, revolvers, badges, knives, watches, razors (though these were prized for use, their edge being famous), nose-caps, bullets, etc. *Souvenirs* were picked up, taken from the dead, or prisoners, either forcibly, or more often, as a free gift or by barter or purchase. So many were collected that ex-R.A.M.C. men must have started many shops after the Armistice. *Souvenirs* were also sold by French touts and in French shops. The word was also applied, in jest, to the baby which many soldiers offered to supply to any young French woman with whom they became friendly—a jest which was taken at its own broad but not literal value. Finally the word became a verb, e.g. "I'm going souveniring to-night" or "Harry's gone to souvenir [i.e. find] a brazier."

So Long.—Exactly corresponds to *au revoir*, *a revederci*, etc.

Spit-and-Polish Parade.—An inspection of a whole battalion by its Colonel or a General: an occasion for much application of *soldier's friend*, *khaki blanco* (cf.), and leather polish.

Spud.—Nickname for any man named Murphy; potatoes, like pigs, being eternally associated in

the English mind with the Irish, and an association being, to an Englishman, half-way to a joke. (Cf. *Buck*, *Darky*, *Tug*, etc.)

SQUARE.—To bribe or in other ways to secure the favour or neutrality of a superior.

SQUAREHEAD.—A German. (Cf. *Jerry*, *Bosche*.)

SQUARE-PUSHER.—A young woman, especially a young woman being courted with a view to marriage or not. The term probably arises from the habit pre-war soldiers made of escorting nursemaids as they pushed perambulators around a city square. Frequently abbreviated to *pusher*. (Cf. *Piece*,*Tart*, *Skirt*.) Farmer and Henley state that in American slang (1895) *square-push* meant *pudendum muliebre*, and this may indicate an origin of the phrase in physical sexuality. But the coarser sense may also be a later development.

SQUARE-PUSHING.—*To go square-pushing* meant either to go out to court a particular girl or to go out in the hope of meeting a friendly female. This involved a general smartening of appearance, hence the derived adjective *square-pushing*, meaning especially neat, brilliant or of good quality, e.g. "I'm putting on my square-pushing tunic to-night." (Cf. *Square-Pusher*.)

SQUIFFY.—Drunk. *Squiff* appears to be connected with *askew* and *squint* and this term therefore probably refers to the deranging effect of liquor on eyesight. (Cf. *Zig-zag*, *Tight*, *Blotto*, *Binge*, *Blind*.)

*S.R.D.—Service Rum Diluted. The initials stamped on the body of rum jars. The dilution must have been infinitesimal. A popular but unauthorized amplification of the initials was—Soon Run Dry. (Cf. *Rum Ration*.)

*Stand By.—This order meant, Don't go away. Be ready. You will soon be required.

*Stand To.—The vigilance kept in all trenches, especially before dawn and nightfall, when everybody stood on the firesteps in case of attack.

Steady On.—Exercise moderation; cease to be lavish or extravagant; don't lose your temper; don't make me lose mine; a general cry of warning and (strictly moderate) indignation from the temperate English heart. (Cf. *Easy.*)

Steel Jug.—Steel helmet. (Cf. *Tin Hat.*)

*Stick Bomb.—A German bomb with a wooden handle, and a string which had to be pulled before the bomb was thrown.

Stiff.—A corpse. Also varied to *stiffie*. Used in friendly invective always with the prefix "big," e.g. "You big stiff!" meaning, "You are clumsy, stupid or incompetent."

*Stokes Gun.—(Cf. *Trench Mortar.*)

Stop.—*To stop one* was vivid for "to be hit by a bullet" or shell fragment. (Cf. *Packet.*)

*Storm Troops.—Synonymous with *Shock Troops* (cf.).

Stout Fellow.—Officers' slang, meaning a worthy man, a good comrade, a reliable friend, a brave soldier.

Strafe.—Noun and verb: punishment or admonition, e.g. "I just heard the C.O. strafing the cooks like hell." Also used for a bombardment by shells, "There's a bloody awful strafe going on up in the supports." From the German phrase and song—"Gott strafe England."

Stripe.—The one, two or three V-shaped chevrons in khaki embroidery worn by Lance-Corporals,

Corporals and Sergeants respectively on the upper arm of each sleeve. (Cf. *Chevron*.)

STUCK.—"Get stuck into it!" meant "Work hard, don't dally!" The metaphor is from digging.

STUFF.—Shellfire.

STUNT.—Any performance of outstanding skill or effectiveness, e.g. an acrobatic performance or a clever ruse at football; a trick or means of benefiting oneself, e.g. "It's a good stunt to fall out before the fatigue party's picked." In time the quality of cleverness became inessential: all that was needed was the unusual element, the break in routine, and "stunt" was applied especially to a big attack or series of attacks, e.g. "The Somme stunt," "The March 1918 stunt"; or to a smaller, localized raid, e.g. "a bombing stunt at night." Also verb, especially of airmen. (Cf. *Show*, *Push*.)

SWADDY.—A private soldier. In the eighteenth century the form was *swad*, *swadkin* or *swad-gill*. Originally dialect, not slang, meaning "a country lout" or "an awkward fellow." From this in the early nineteenth century was derived the slang *swaddy*, used chiefly by sailors of soldiers.

*SWAGGER-STICK.—Short, whanging cane, with a metal head, carried ornamentally in England by soldiers going out of camp. An absurdity, enforced by many colonels.

SWEATING ON THE TOP LINE.—Used only in this particular form. It meant, to be full of hope and reasonable expectation of happiness and success. Perhaps from the gambling game *House* (cf.): when the top line was nearly filled, victory was in sight, and a sweat of exhilaration and anxiety broke out.

Sweet Fanny Adams.—Nothing at all, with emphasis. Originally a naval term for tinned meat. From the notorious murder of a girl so named in 1812. (Cf. *F.A.*)

Swig.—Drink, noun or verb. Used especially of a hurried or illicit drink. Perhaps from the gulping noise in the throat. Pre-War.

Swinging the Lead.—Malingering: or otherwise evading duty. A great source of pride with some soldiers and—in certain circumstances—with all soldiers. A *lead-swinger* who let other men do work he was able to do, or who practised his craft when danger was threatened, was beloved of no one. But the man who *swung it* skilfully on experts, such as doctors, in England or behind the line, received genuine admiration and kept up no pretence before his comrades. The phrase is said to have come from the sea: a sailor would be set to taking the depth from a ship's bows as she approached inshore, but instead of letting the plummet sink he would swing the lead idly through the air and call out fictitious depths. The phrase entered the Army probably through seaport-cum-garrison towns such as Portsmouth, and perhaps through troopships. It also took the preposition *on* in two senses—*to swing the lead on* a superior officer, i.e. to deceive him, and *to swing it on* a sore foot, or an imaginary pain, i.e. making these the instrument of deceit. (Cf. *Leadswinger*, *Cushy*, *Scrounge*, *Wangle*.)

Tails Up.—Happy, cheerful, confident. E.g. "The gunners have got their tails up now the old guns are replaced." Officers' slang, perhaps from terriers or fighting cocks.

Talk Wet.—To talk nonsense (without intending to). It was always the other person who *talked*

wet and was told not to with considerable emphasis. The phrase is perhaps derived from the habit excitable and argumentative people often have of spluttering a spray of saliva out of their mouths as they talk.

*Tanks.—Armoured cars moved, not by wheels, but by a caterpillar tread and were able to cross open country. The name was given to them as a reference of innocent appearance, so that the enemy should not, through spies, anticipate their appearance in September 1916. *Male Tanks* carried six-pounder guns; *Female Tanks* machine guns. There were others used for transport.

Tapped.—Slightly mad, below the normal in sanity; of eccentric behaviour. Metaphor perhaps from a barrel from which part of the contents have been drawn. (Cf. *Doolally*, *Touched* and *Dippy*.)

Tart.—A prostitute, or a promiscuous woman. Also often used, familiarly but without sexual insult, of any young woman. Grose gives the word only as an adjective, meaning "pert". This suggests a possible origin.

Tassie.—Soldier from Tasmania. Confined in use to Australians and New Zealanders; most English soldiers probably had no idea whether Tasmania was a country or a disease. Formed by analogy with *Aussie* (cf.).

Telling the Tale.—Explaining away military offences and delinqencies—the offender doing the explanation.

Terriers.—The Territorial Force (now Territorial Army). Pre-war.

Thick.—Friendly, intimate, e.g. "They are very thick lately". This use of the term dates back at least to the eighteenth century.

*Thigh Boots.—Synonymous with *Gum boots* (cf.).

Third Man.—The most popular superstition in France was the firm belief that the *third man* to light a cigarette from the same match would inevitably be killed soon after. It was so strongly held that anyone inadvertently attempting *to go third man* would have his hand or his face pushed violently away—unless he was very unpopular. See C. E. Montague's story, "The First Blood Sweep" in *Fiery Particles* (Chatto and Windus, 1923).

Three Blue Lights.—It was a standard joke among soldiers who despaired of the War ever ending that Peace would be announced by a rocket—*three dark-blue lights*, which would, of course, be quite undetectable against a night sky. (Cf. *Very Light* and *S.O.S.*)

Throw One's Weight About.—To bluster, to assert one's authority or to attempt to intimidate or impress one's equals. E.g. "He's not half throwing his weight about since he got that stripe."

Thumbs Up.—An expression denoting intense joy or gratification. Perhaps from the Roman arena gesture when the spectators decided to let a gladiator live. E.g. "Thumbs up, lads. There's buckshee rum to-night." Also as an adjective, "It's thumbs up in this company now the S.M.'s gone on leave." Often accompanied by a gesture, both thumbs vertical above clenched fingers. Occasionally used with a sexual meaning.

Ticket.—Official discharge from the Army, especially a discharge given for medical reasons before the full period of service (in the pre-war Regular Army seven years with the colours) had expired. (Cf. *Ticket-of-leave*: given to discharged con-

victs.) To *work one's ticket* was to scheme, by bribery, malingering or influence, to get out of the Army. It would be noticed that a certain man kept complaining of chronic pains or began to behave peculiarly. Comments would be turned aside by old soldiers with the remark, "Oh, he's only trying to work his ticket." Thus the phrase in time became a genial and facetious suggestion that a man was mentally defective.

Tickler's.—The prevalent brand of issue jam in the early war years. *Tickler* became generic for jam.

Tight.—Drunk. Comparable to *skinful*; a sufficiency of liquor. (Cf. *Zig-zag*, *Blotto*, *Squiffy*, *Binge*, *Blind*.)

Time-Serving Man.—A Regular Army soldier who had enlisted not for the vague and elastic *duration of the War* (cf.) but for a definite period, usually seven years. Needless to say, such men were not discharged when the period of their contract expired, but often easier and safer employment was found for them.

Tin-Hat.—Typical English facetiousness for a steel helmet. Just occasionally for drunk.

Tin-opener.—Facetious for bayonet.

Tit-for.—Tit-for-tat, i.e. hat. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.) *T.f.t.* also=You can bet your bloody hat!

Toasting Fork.—Bayonet, which was often used for toasting bread.

Toffee Apples.—Trench mortar bombs, so called from the haft, like the skewer in a toffee-apple.

Tommy.—Short for *Thomas Atkins*, a journalistic name for a private soldier from one T.A. who mythically distinguished himself at Waterloo; or perhaps a formal name on documents like

"John" and "Richard Doe." Never used by English troops except derisively or when imitating the style of a newspaper or a charitable old lady. Used by Australians and New Zealanders; also as an adjective, e.g. *Tommy Officer*, or *a Tommy N.C.O*, but never "Tommy Private." Picked up by the French and Germans from newspapers.

"Tommy" Cooker.—A small form of oil-stove, producing a very little heat very slowly. Officially distributed at periods when the regular cooking arrangements could not be continued. (Cf. *Canteen*, *Dixie*, *Orderly Man*, *Dish Out*.)

Too Bloody Irish!—Of course. Almost exactly synonymous with *Not Half* (cf.). Variant: *too bloody right*.

Tooth-pick.—Facetious for bayonet.

Toot Sweet.—Quick, as an adverb or an admonition. From the French *tout de suite*. A popular variation was, "*Toot Sweet—and the Tooter the Sweeter*." (Cf. *Jildi*, *Jerk*.)

*Torpedo.—An *aerial torpedo*, a sort of missile fired from the trench and attaining only a low trajectory or flight before it hit the ground and exploded.

Touch.—*To touch* a superior for some personal advantage meant, to ask for it ingratiatingly at a suitable moment. "Wait till the canteen's open, and I'll touch the S.M. for a pass."

Touched.—A little mad. Temporarily insane, especially on one particular subject, e.g. "He's touched about that estaminet—can't keep away from it." Probably from "touched by the heat of the sun", a popular source of insanity. (Cf. *Doolally* and *Tapped*.)

Touch Out.—To meet with a stroke of good fortune. Used absolutely or with a subordinate clause, e.g. "He touched out for a week-end pass."

*Town Major.—An officer, usually of a rank considerably below that of Major, who was permanently stationed in a town or large village and had to find billeting accommodation as requested by the *Area Commandant* (cf.) for large or small parties of troops passing through. At one period Arras possessed a *Town Major* of eccentric character who used to stroll through the streets under shell-fire, serenely confident beneath the shade of an umbrella.

*Tracer Bullets.—Machine-gun bullets used by airmen; made phosphorescent so that they could be seen by day or night and their effect estimated. Also incendiary.

*Trench Mortar.—A small gun, fired from a front trench into the enemy's line. There were various forms of trench mortars, all hurling over, and quite slowly and visibly, large bombs which spun unevenly in flight. Popular names for trench mortar bombs were *Footballs*, *Flying Pigs* and *Toffee Apples*. Later, a more efficient weapon, the *Stokes Gun*, was invented, which fired shell-shaped bombs instead of the old round ones. Trench mortars caused as much trouble for their own infantry as for the enemy's, and were everywhere unpopular. When a T.M. battery had fired a few shots it departed with speed, and the infantry remained to await the inevitable retaliation from the enemy artillery. (Cf. *Minnie*.)

Trez Beans.—A facetious and deliberate corruption of "très bien," used as a general exclamation of pleasure, e.g. "My word, it's trez beans here." (Cf. *Fray Bentos*.)

Tug.—All men named Wilson were "Tug" Wilsons. (Cf. *Darky* and *Nobby*.)

Umpteen.—A large number, many, lots. E.g. "There's umpteen parcels down at H.Q."

Uncle Ned.—Bed. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang*.)

Up the Line.—There was no line along which one travelled. *To go up the line* from the Base camps at Etaples, Le Havre, Rouen, etc. meant to travel twenty or thirty miles to within marching distance of the trenches. *To go up the line* from billets in "back areas" meant to move into front, support, or reserve trenches.

Up There.—"It's up there you want it," ("want" meaning "lack"): an expression of pride accompanied by a significant tap on the forehead, to indicate intellectual superiority after one had "wangled" extra leave or a cushy job or some such privilege.

*V.A.D.—Voluntary Aid Detachment. But more usually the trained but not professional nurses who volunteered in thousands for hospital service abroad or in England. Navy blue outdoor uniform. (Cf. *W.A.A.C.*, *Women's Legion*, and *W.R.A.F.*)

*Valise.—(Private Soldier): The khaki knapsack carried on the back in which were stored spare underclothing, overcoat, ground sheet, emergency rations, etc. (Cf. *Pack*.) (Officer): a canvas kitbag, carried on a mess-cart.

Vamoose (or Vamoss).—To go quickly, to make off, to escape. From the Spanish *vamos*=let us go. Perhaps preserved in the Regular Army by oral tradition from the Peninsular War, but more probably brought from Spanish and South American ports by sailors.

VELVET.—To be on velvet = to be in exceptionally fortunate and comfortable circumstances. (Cf. *Cushy*.)

*VERY LIGHT.—A rocket fired from a brass pistol. Used in the front line to illuminate *No Man's Land* (cf.) at night, so that sentries could be sure the enemy was not approaching. Also for signalling that a position had been captured, or for help in emergency. One form of rocket floated slowly down attached to a small parachute, illuminating the earth beneath for what seemed a geological age, during which no one dared move. The spelling of the British rocket used to be uncertain: variations of the form used here are *Verey*, *Véry* and *Vérey*; but *Very* is now given as the correct form by the *N.E.D.* (Cf. *S.O.S.* and *Three Blue Lights*.)

VIN BLANC.—White *vin ordinaire*. Rarely good in Northern France, but in great demand because the beer was even worse, and spirits—except expensive cognac—not procurable. *Vin rouge* was not so popular, perhaps because its name was not so amusing to English ears unaccustomed to French. (Cf. *Estaminet*.)

*W.A.A.C.—Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, members of which were known as Waacs (pronounced "wacks"). They wore khaki uniform and performed clerical, cooking, and waiting jobs at the Base Camps. Civilians were always ready to spread scandal about *Waacs*; to the French it was inconceivable that decent women could live in close proximity to so many men and remain virtuous; and most soldiers were ready to invent and pass on ribald stories, just as boys do about girls' schools. The *Waacs* and the V.A.D.'S roughly correspond to the 1914–15

volunteers: they were never conscripted and nine hundred and ninety-nine lurid stories about them can be entirely discredited. The thousandth *may* be true about an odd Waac or two. But soldiers who wished to misbehave sexually found their few opportunities generally in the brothels or the lower sort of estaminets. (Cf. *V.A.D.*, *W.R.A.F.* and *W.R.E.N.*)

WALLAH.—Chap, fellow. Used especially of an officer with special duties, e.g. "He's the new Lewis-gun wallah." (From Hindustani?)

WANGLE.—Verb: to procure goods or an advantage of some kind illicitly but without punishment, by the exercise of cunning, moral pressure, blackmail or bribery. Almost everything could be *wangled* in the Army by certain people, from a "sleeping-out" pass in barracks to promotion. In fact, *wangling* became semi-official. A man who had lost say an entrenching tool or a blanket would not be punished, but would be told openly by his platoon commander to *wangle* or *scrounge* (cf.) another. Noun : a successful piece of jobbery or unwarranted privilege.

WANGLER.—One who habitually obtained privileges which he had not earned. (Cf. *Wangle*.)

WAR BABIES.—The illegitimate children with which, on the outbreak of war, sensational newspapers predicted England would be crowded.

WAR ON.—*Remember there's a war on* meant "Don't waste time; don't be frivolous; let's get back to our real job." A popular admonition to *scroungers* (cf.) and gossips.

WASH-OUT.—Verb: to cancel, to disregard, to supersede, e.g. "Wash out that order for early parade." Noun: a failure, a disaster or an incompetent person, e.g. "This raid's going to be another

wash-out," or "The sergeant's a fair wash-out with a spade." (Cf. *Dud.*)

Waza.—A very well known (low) native quarter of Cairo. The Battles of the Waza were two Australian brushes with the police in 1915.

Weigh Up.—To *weigh up* a man or a situation meant to estimate at the proper value and to be in a position to master the man or the situation. Frequently used in the passive, e.g. "The S.M.'s got you weighed up, my lad."

West.—*To go west* was the most popular euphemism in the Army for "to be killed." Used in such phrases, "Oh, Bill went west at Ginchy." "He's gone west now, poor b——." One of the few expressions which revealed the suppressed emotion of the soldier, and his secret sense of the tragedy in which he was caught. The origin of the phrase is obscure; Weekley suggests it is a natural analogy from the setting sun. Its origin is, perhaps, American, and it may well have survived from the pioneering days in America, when to go further west into unexplored country often meant death at the hands of Indians. Another suggestion is that it is a survival from thieves' slang, meaning to go to Tyburn, to be hanged. The phrase was also used trivially of things lost, stolen or strayed, e.g. "My razor's gone west again".

Whack.—Share, especially an equal share. E.g. "I've not had my fair whack of the cigarettes." Probably from the noise made in shaking out a spoonful of sticky porridge or rice.

Whack Out.—Variation of *Dish-out* (cf.).

What About.—A peculiar idiom capable, according to the inflexion of the voice, of conveying many meanings, e.g. "What about a rest, cor-

poral?" meant, "Will you consider our proposal for a rest". "What about the poor bleedin' sentries?" meant, "Don't forget those who are absent in sharing out rations". And "What about it, now, what about it!" bawled by an N.C.O., meant, "Hurry! Stick to your job!" or at reveille, "Get out of bed!"

WHAT HOPES!—A retort expressing utter disbelief in some promise or prophecy of a future good (or not so bad as at present) time. A variation, addressed to a man confident of securing an advantage for himself, was *What a hope you've got!*

*WHIPPET.—A lighter and more mobile form of *tank* (cf.).

WHIZZ-BANG.—A light shell fired from one of the smaller field-artillery guns—the British 18-pounder, the French 75 (millimetres), the German 77 (millimetres). The term is onomatopœic, and was applied to the shell only as a hostile explosion. Owing to the short range and low trajectory, whizz-bangs arrived as soon, if not sooner, than you heard them. Nearly always applied to the German 77.

WIN.—To acquire unlawfully. E.g. "Where did you get that fountain-pen?"—"Won it from an Aussie when he wasn't looking."

WIND-UP.—Fear. Used with *have*, not *feel*. *To have the wind-up* implied no disgrace, and could be mentioned casually in conversation, although usually in the past tense. The term appears to be a war-time creation. It is just possible it harks back to the days when felons were transplanted. *Wind-up* then would mean the end of their last hope, for the ship could sail. Perhaps the gulping and other sensations in the throat which are extreme symptoms of "wind-up" re-

minded some father of a baby's "wind" troubles. A later variation was *wind vertical.* Another development was "to put the wind up", meaning "to make afraid", e.g. "Those minnies fairly put the wind up me." (Cf. *windy.*)

WINDY.—Adjective=apprehensive of personal danger or trouble. Derived from *wind-up* (cf.), but unlike that term could be used of others in a derogatory sense, e.g. "He's too windy to stir out of his dug-out." It was also much more freely transferred to the uses of ordinary routine, apart from shelling and other dangers, than "wind-up," e.g. "He's windy of going out without a pass."

*WINGS.—A qualified pilot in the Royal Air Force wore on his tunic an emblem—two *wings.* An observer wore only one. Hence *to have one's wings* meant to be qualified to fly alone.

WINICK.—*To be* or *to go winick* meant to be mad or foolish. From the lunatic asylum in the Lancashire town of that name. (Cf. *Doolally.*)

*WOMEN'S LEGION.—A corps of women volunteers, employed chiefly in driving motor-cars and lorries. Khaki uniform. (Cf. *W.A.A.C.*, *W.R.A.F.* and *V.A.D.*)

WONKY.—Adjective=defective, not working properly. E.g., "The Lewis gun's wonky again." (They always were.) Origin obscure.

WOODBINE.—A cheap cigarette popular with some soldiers from the urban working classes. A rank smoke which kind-hearted civilians believed (from Kipling and the magazines, no doubt) all soldiers delighted in; packets were often dropped on hospital beds—the poor patients groaning under the bedclothes. A most vile incense to offer to the god of slaughter.

*Wooden Track.—A rough road over boggy country, made by laying wooden planks transversely. Unsheltered and extremely visible, most wooden tracks were heavily shelled and needed constant repair.

Working One's Ticket.—See *Ticket.*

*W.R.A.F.—Women's Royal Air Force. Women volunteers employed chiefly as chauffeurs and clerks. Sky blue uniform. Known as *Wrafs.* (Cf. *W.A.A.C.*, *V.A.D.* and *Women's Legion.*)

*W.R.N.S.—Women's Royal Naval Service. Women volunteers for clerical and motor-driving work. Occasionally seen at the Base in France. Navy blue uniform. Known as *Wrens.*

Wypers.—See *Ypres.*

Yank.—Short for *Yankee*: a New Englander, but applied by the British to all Americans, not always politely. (Cf. *Russki*, *Macaroni*, *Pork-and-Beans*, *Chink*, *Aussie*, *Froggie.*)

Y.M.—Young Men's Christian Association hut for recreation and the sale of tea, cocoa and biscuits.

You Bet !—In full *You* (*can*) *bet your life.* A popular expression of certitude or emphasis. E.g. "Would you like to get your own back on the Q.M.?" Answer: "You bet I would!" Almost a form of oath. (Cf. *Not Half.*)

Ypres.—According to the newspapers, the British soldier pronounced this word *Wypers.* He may have done so in 1914 or early 1915. After that, the majority of the troops seemed to harbour a suspicion that French was not properly pronounced by the same rules as English. They never attained a French pronunciation, but they avoided a straightforward anglicization. The

commonest methods of tackling Ypres were "Eepray" and "Eeps." (Cf. *Etaples*.) It is, however, known that *Wipers* (less "correct" as a spelling, but more frequent than ours) was the pronunciation invented by Lord French, or someone else of high rank, at the very outset of the War.

Zig-Zag.—Drunk. Heard only in France, among French civilians. Picked up probably from English, but not common English slang. Onomatopœic. (Cf. *Jig-a-jig*; also *Tight*, *Blotto*, *Squiffy*, *Binge*, *Blind*.)

NOTE TO THE GLOSSARY

NOTE TO THE GLOSSARY

It would be difficult to find one person in Britain whose life, inwardly and externally, was not affected by the War. Seven million men before the end served in the Army, Navy or Auxiliary Forces; one million of them were killed, many millions were wounded at least once. Every one of them had several people intensely interested in his welfare. And the number of women who served as clerks, cooks, waitresses and nurses must also have exceeded a million. The extent, therefore, as well as the profundity of the experience, made it affect the national character, perhaps lastingly. To some of us the male 'younger generation' of the post-War decade seems apathetic and cold-hearted; their successors now in the nursery, the cradle and the womb, we may hope will recover freshness and zest. But they will surely never be as innocent, as cocksure-innocent, as the youth which trooped into the World War of 1914 expecting something between a pageant-crusade and an imperialist picnic. Human nature, of course, is not to be purged of folly even by the blood of millions, and no doubt the future will compose its own Mafeking songs and invent its own methods of jubilating over victories and annexations. But no one will be able to sing with quite so confident a heart as the crowds of 1899 sang *We Don't Want to Fight, But by Jingo if We Do*, and the crowds of 1914 sang (in better taste but to the same effect) *Your King and Country Need You*.

The Somme and Ypres may by then be mere words in the history text-books, but a residue of the grim wisdom they imparted to the race will be coursing heavily in the veins of youth, to chill the martial intoxication.

An experience so wide-spread and so deep-sunk was bound to modify the language considerably. The surface, at least, of all emotions must late or soon be expressed in words, for our own comfort. And the English language—it is its great glory, its mark of superiority over, for example, French—is infinitely susceptible to modification and to individual use. Probably the most imaginative and sensuously exact language of all, it is continually unfolding springs of metaphor within itself. An English word is never content to do as it is told. Its marriages are not often arranged. It prefers romantic elopements with some other word for which the purists never intended it. *Push up* will couple with the ineligible *daisies*, and so form a new phrase, a new metaphor, and enrich the English consciousness by an illuminating flash of sardonic humour.

This faculty of creation and variation, the genius of the language, was enormously stimulated by the War. The new recruits reached out eagerly for the traditional vocabulary of the old Army, and rolled it over on appreciative palates. *Dodging the Column*, *Rooti*, *Swinging the Lead*, *On the Jildi:* these were all quickly adopted and mouthed with an air, just as a new boy at school is all ears for the niceties of its special slang. A new occupation, a new vocabulary. But presently the occupation changed, grew to vast proportions and assumed horrible aspects beyond the knowledge and capacity of the old Army. Another vocabulary was needed, and day by day it was supplied by inventive spirits responding to the onslaughts of circumstance. Physical fear became a commonplace of routine, but a commonplace that had to be conquered by private

resolution and outward derision. It was made a guy, and *Wind-up* was the placard pinned upon it.

Only a small portion of the six hundred references included in this Glossary are pure creations out of nothing. *Wind-up*, *Oojah-cum-pivvy*, *Stunt*, *Napoo*, *Posh* and their kindred are necessarily rare. The majority are common words adapted or extended in meaning. Thus *Eye-wash*, *Landowner* and *Packet* each became charged with new content far removed from the original reference.

The definitions and occasional "dissertations" given in this Glossary under each word render any detailed examination here superfluous; but one or two main characteristics may be noted. First, the extremely wide range of sources. Dialect and urban (especially Cockney) slang is resuscitated: and the Old Army slang draws upon Hindustani, Persian and Arabic. The downright English habit of anglicizing French, that prevailed before everyone had a smattering, does not persist. The phrases of the country are transformed into something neither English nor French: as in *Cumsah* and *Etapps*. And suddenly, out of the forgotten depositories of eighteenth-century slang, an odd word or two turns up refurbished, like *Binge* and *Clink*.

Second, irony is frequent, almost prevalent. It is the typically English irony of understatement and ridicule. Some of the terror disappeared, together with the pomp, from war and military glory, when the soldier decided to call his steel-helmet a *Tin-hat*, his bayonet a *Tooth-pick*, his entrenching-tool handle a *Piggy-stick*, and a murderous bombardment a *Strafe* or *Hate*.

Third, the exhilaration which most men felt in the hardening of their bodies and the sharpening of their physical faculties is clearly to be traced in the imagery, the onomatopœia and the sensuous fidelity of many of these words. *Brass-hat* conveys so vivid an image

of a general's resplendent cap that the mind easily sketches in the petulant wine-dark face beneath it. *Blimp* has exactly the shape and the resilient flabbiness of the airship it signifies, and anyone who has ever emptied a scuttle of coal knows a good deal of what that shell-burst called a *Coal-box* looked like—in the distance. And in the two short syllables of *Dug-out* is suggested all the impetus of the spade-edge and the stiff resistance of the clay. It is a word you can feel in the palms of your hands and the sinews of your arms: the smell of broken soil lingers in it under the warm fuggy aromas of its later associations.

NOTE.—The *Jingo* song mentioned on p. 185 had, of course, originated in the 'seventies; at the time of *Diplomacy*, the play adapted rather than translated from Sardou; it was sung by Mott.

NOTE

The editors have occasionally referred in the Glossary to certain dictionaries. These are:

Grose: *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, 1785, consulted in the third edition, 1796.

The New English Dictionary.

J. S. Farmer and W. E. Henley: *Slang and its Analogues*, 7 vols., 1890–1904.

Joseph Wright: *The English Dialect Dictionary*, 6 vols, 1898–1905.

Ernest Weekley: *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, 1921.

A. Dauzat: *L'Argot de la Guerre*, 1918, consulted in the 2nd edition (revised), 1919.

F. Déchelette: *L'Argot des Poilus*, 1918.

To Edward Fraser and John Gibbons' *Soldier and Sailor Words and Phrases* (Routledge, 1925) acknowledgments are due for about twenty references which might have been overlooked, as well as for a flood of light upon *Sweet Fanny Adams*. The editors feel that there is no competition between this glossary and Messrs. Fraser and Gibbons' excellent compilation, which is wider in scope (taking in American slang and battle-honours, traditions, regimental nicknames, etc.), but written in less detail and from a more or less "official" standpoint.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CHANTS AND SAYINGS

It is probable that catch phrases have always been popular; for wit, however much desired or striven for, does not rise to every-one's lips pat to the occasion. Even Whistler and Wilde were said to rehearse their effects and to bend and urge the conversation till the suitable moment for intervention arrived. So that the lower middle-classes, at least, have long been thankful to take their wit ready-made, and an important function of the Victorian and Edwardian music-hall was to furnish phrases suitable for use in all the emergencies of life, and recognizable at once as humour. Before the War, if your hat blew off, or a dog chased a cat, or an old gentleman slipped on a banana-skin, or a baby swallowed a plum-stone, a laugh could always be raised among certain people if the would-be wit ejaculated, "Keep your hair on!" At other periods the phrase was, "Chase me, girls!"; "Does your mother want a rabbit?"; "Get your hair cut!"; "Ginger, you're barmy!" (barmy = less than sane); "Have a banana!" and so on. The requisites for such phrases were homeliness and directness, for ready-made wit always tends to become repartee.

When the War broke out the new armies subsisted for a time on what catch phrases the music-halls produced. "How's your father?" was one of the most popular, turned to all sorts of ribald, ridiculous and heroic uses. This was the last utterance of at least one dandified but efficient subaltern, dying of stomach wounds.

But as time went on the soldier began to produce his own sayings, even as he produced his own songs, to help him through his cataclysmic days. In his first disillusionment, he turned an picked up some of the fine phrases which had stirred his heart into the patriotic desire to enlist.

became a method of telling a man he was selected for some especially disgusting, arduous or dangerous duty.

Remember Belgium!

was heard with ironic and bitter intonations in the muddy wastes of the Salient. And some literal-minded, painstaking individual, anxious that the point should be rubbed well in, would be sure to add: "As if I'm ever likely to forget the bloody place!" Another "slogan" from the recruiting posters repeated scathingly in times of distress and misery was—

What Did You Do in the Great War, Daddy?

(And, by the way, it is remarkable how far astray that piece of child-psychology went. The post-war infant displays not the slightest interest in Daddy's martial past; and if the poor man dares to mention it, unasked, assumes the most snobbish and disbelieving expression. War-books have wrecked the private market in anecdotes.) Not dissimilar, although it had never been used for recruiting, was—

Thank Gawd, we've got a navy!

It was always "Gawd", even with north-country troops, to indicate the burlesque of the original sentiment. This phrase was called into use whenever the incompetence of authority became more manifest than usual. The original:

Are we downhearted?—No!

soon became the vehement—

Are we downhearted?—Yes!

But this was intended as a humorous comment. Sometimes it would be expanded, and declaimed by alternate voices, thus:

Are we downhearted?
No!
Then you damn (or bloody) soon will be!

Among invented sayings there were two especially directed against the private soldier's superiors. One was general and typified concisely the implied and the often explicit arrogance of many senior officers towards the ranks. This was (the first word is a polite synonym for the one actually used)—

Curse you, Jack, I'm all right!

It was a literal and true interpretation of the expression to be seen on the sleek faces of staff officers perched on their sleek horses or reclining in their sleek motor-cars (which, whenever possible, bespattered marching infantry with mud). To the private soldier the Staff were much what the capricious gods must have been to the Greek and Trojan infantrymen. They were known only by occasional glimpses (out of the line) and by the effects of their temperamental, inhuman and rarely intelligent fiats. The platoon-sergeant, whatever his defects, was visible and human. He might be fussy, easily scared and ill-tempered; but when he had taken too big a share of the rations and the next best dug-out to the officers', he had reached the limit of his power for evil. Besides, there were thousands of really good sergeants, respected and liked. On the individual's conduct and character it depended whether the privates shouted:

Some say "Good old sergeant!"
Others say "—— the old sergeant!"

with rancour or with quite affectionate jocularity.

Kiss me, sergeant!

was a common piece of facetiousness, uttered after a sergeant had been more than usually officious; and often in camps, to the orderly sergeant after he had commanded "Lights out!"

The Biblical David, for some unknown reason, was held responsible for rainfall, and drenched, shivering troops would apostrophize the dripping skies—

Send it down, David, send it down!

To express general fed-upedness and exasperation, the proper exclamation was—

Roll on, Duration!

The volunteers of 1914–15 enlisted for "four years or the duration of the war, whichever shall be longer". *Roll on, Duration!* thus meant, May the end of the War come quickly and deliver us from these miseries! In a similar mood all rumours of good times to come and promises from authority would be met by the singing of the first line of a Nonconformist hymn—

Tell me the old, old story.

For chronic grousers the favourite reprimand was—

What do you want?—Jam on it?

But this was used just as often ironically, when extra fatigues or working parties took the place of a promised rest, or anything fell short of the normal standard.

For repartee or to clinch an argument, the classic phrase was—

Before you come up!

(The historic present tense.) It meant, I enlisted before you, or I've seen more active service than you. The only answer possible was a citation of actual service and experience, or a fight.

Besides these catch phrases, used chiefly in dialectic or invective, there were certain sayings and chants which were shouted aloud on the march or in any place where soldiers congregated "off parade", purely in order to arouse amusement. The appreciative laugh never failed. There were the mother jokes:

Remember I'm your mother and get up those stairs!

A childhood memory from the days before Dalton and the cult of self-expression in the nursery. And the famous commencement of the letter home:

Dear Mother, I am sending you ten shillings—but not this week.

Heard practically every day, this retained to the end of the War its power of amusing simple men.

You may have broke your mother's heart—you won't break mine!

was originally a stock phrase of drill-sergeants taking recruits in hand. It was intended both to intimidate and to reassure the new soldiers that the tyrant of the barrack-square was human underneath. A jest widely appreciated and often repeated by privates.

A Soldier's Farewell

was originally invective—the farewell being in full, "Goodbye and —— you!" But its chief use was as a jocular exclamation made very loudly for the amusement of others.

was heard whenever rations or billets, rum or any other creature comfort turned out better or more plentiful than might have been expected. It was varied into *That's the stuff to give 'em!* and even *That's the giv to stuff 'em!* and in this form would often be shouted approvingly to artillery in action.

The crushing retort to a superior officer was always the private's dream and delight. One very popular snatch dramatized the officer or N.C.O. inspecting the appearance of the men and growing facetious as he found an offender who, however, was more than a match for him. It ran—

> Ah, ah! no bloody shave this morning?
> Ah, ah! no bloody razor!

The headlong descent from the heroic strain was another form of stock humour. As, imitating a reciter's announcement of the title of his "piece":

> Napoleon's Greeting to his Troops—
> "Good morning, troops."

The two longest were also the best. Both were dramatic. The first actually rhymed and was metrical:

> To-day's my daughter's wedding day,
> Ten thousand pounds I'll give away (Three cheers!).
> On second thoughts I think it best
> To put it away in the old oak chest.
>
> Yer mingy bastard! Chuck him out! etc., etc.

The second was declaimed like a scene from a pantomime or a melodrama, and sometimes two men would take alternate lines:

> Help, help, there's a woman overboard!
> Who will save her?
> I will!
> Who are you?
> [1] Barnacle Bill the sailor, just returned from sea——

whereupon the whole assembly broke into the whistling of a hornpipe.

[1] The actual adjective was coarse.

APPENDIX B

BUGLE CALLS

In the line, bugle calls, together with ceremonies and "compliments", were dispensed with. But in billets and rest-camps, at the Base and in England they were in daily use—although many, proper to the more leisurely routine of peace time, were never heard from 1914 to 1918, and by the majority of war-time soldiers would not be recognized. The cavalry and artillery had trumpet calls, some of them exceedingly beautiful but too long and elaborate to be fitted with unofficial words as many of the infantry calls were. The cavalry *Reveillé* (pronounced always "revally" or "revelly"), for example, was a sustained composition, but the infantry call went very well to:

Get out of bed!
Get out of bed!
You lazy blighters:
I feel sorry for you I do.

Scarcely a hut or a tent that had not a light sleeper sufficiently awake to murmur the chant in time with the bugler's brazen modulations, before the Corporal found his boots and threw them at some snoring blanket-covered head.

Fifteen minutes before parade was due the *Quarter Dress* was sounded, slow, brief, pregnant:

A quarter of an hour to do it in!

Parade itself was very brisk and cheerful:

Fall in A!
Fall in B!
Fall in every Companee!

Meal-times were signalled encouragingly:

Come to the Cookhouse door, boys,
Come to the Cookhouse door.
When you see the Sergeant-Cook smile,
Come to the Cookhouse door.

When "dry" rations (bread, butter, sugar, etc.) were to be issued for the day, the Orderly Men were warned by a deliciously plaintive melody to which was sung:

How can I draw rations
When I'm not the orderly man?

Officer's Mess (meal-time, especially dinner) had its own call, to which went a very gross chant indeed. Slightly amended, it runs:

Officers' wives
Get puddens and pies,
A sergeant's wife gets skilly,
But a private's wife gets nothing at all
To fill her empty belly.

All these ditties are the invention of the pre-War Regular Army, as this reference to wives "on the strength" (i.e. lodged and fed in barracks at the Army's expense) clearly shows. Another daily call was *Post*:

Letters from Lousy Lou,
Letters from Lousy Lou,
Letters for you
And letters for me,
And letters from Lousy Lou.

Men who were confined to barracks as a punishment were *Defaulters*. A bugle was blown every half-hour they were "off-parade", on hearing which they had to report immediately to the Guard Room.

You can be a defaulter
As long as you like
As long as you answer your name.

Once a week in England, and at irregular intervals of anything from four to ten weeks in France, the soldiers' wages were paid, a whole company parading at a time, each man stepping forward as his name was called. To the *Pay Parade* call was fitted these words:

Fall in for pay, boys,
Fall in for pay.
You've bloody-well earned, boys.
Your shilling a day.

Occasionally varied to:

Swinging the lead, boys,
Swinging the lead.
Always remember
To work your head.

At sunset *Retreat* was sounded, a ceremonious and lovely call without any utilitarian significance attached:

You won't go to Heaven
When you die, Mary Ann.
No, you won't,
No, you won't,
No, you won't, Mary Ann.

Last call of the day, and the loveliest, was *Last Post*. Of this C. E. Montague writes in *Disenchantment*:

"That most lovely and melancholy of calls, the noble death of each day's life, a sound moving about hither and thither, like a veiled figure making gestures both stately and tender, among the dim thoughts that we have about death the approaching extinguisher."

It was so beautiful and so moving that no one ever profaned it with words. Only here and there at the sustained repetition of the two notes which precede the concluding flourish, a man would murmur, quietly as if to himself, "Lights out! Lights out!" and fall to sleep with the tune of it still echoing slumberously in his ears.

POSTSCRIPT
FOR THE SECOND EDITION

PREFATORY

This edition has been carefully revised and considerably augmented. Numerous alterations have been made to the body of the book: most notably, two stanzas are added to each of *Après la Guerre* and *Raining*, and a lively variation of *I've Lost my Rifle and Bayonet* is given.

In this postscript we add ten songs (and a significant variant opening stanza to another); a hundred new words[1] and further notes on fourteen others; many "items" to *Chants and Sayings*; and three bugle-calls.

We wish to thank the following for helpful criticism, interesting suggestions, and generous information: Messrs. Desmond MacCarthy, J. B. Priestley, Ernest Weekley, R. Crompton Rhodes, Stephen Southwold, N. T. McMurdo, G. P. Saben, A. R. Cross, J. F. Petrie, E. V. de Fontmell, W. Collin Brooks, and J. S. Simmons.[2] They have assisted us in a task infinitely more difficult than is commonly supposed, for, quite apart from the glossary (in which we have worked virtually by ourselves), the mere collecting and sifting of the songs has proved very exacting, while the establishing of "a sound text" has demanded patience and an assiduous discrimination, for there is no written authority in most instances. We did not for a moment expect to satisfy everybody, for we have not satisfied even ourselves—except in so far as we know that we have done all that is possible for the time being.

J. B. and E. P.

July 28, 1930.

[1] Many of these (especial thanks are here due to Messrs. N. T. McMurdo and Stephen Southwold) are omitted in "Fraser & Gibbons", large though that dictionary be. Some of these words are added to assist the civilian to a full enjoyment of *The Wipers Times*.

[2] Also, at the last moment, J. C. Coltart and A. M. Currie.

An interesting variation of the first stanza of *Madame, Have You . . .* is this:

Madame, I've got money to spend,
Cinq sous, cinq sous;
Madame, I've got money to spend,
Cinq sous, cinq sous.
Madame, I've got money to spend,
Seldom the case with your daughter's friend:
Inky-pinky parley-vous.

The famous *I've Lost my Rifle and Bayonet* has this very effective variant ending:

I've lost my rations and greatcoat,
I've lost my button-stick too;
I've lost my hold-all: and now I've got —— all:
Sergeant, what shall I do?

A song that can only be mentioned is *Mary, Is it True?* This was inherited from the Regular Army. Belonging to Group III, it was sung with tremendous gusto, especially in canteens. It consists of only two verses, but what it loses in length it makes up in obscenity.

The next, a marching song, has a neater phrasing than most; there is certainly no folk nor Regular Army influence here:—

Oh what a life, living in a trench,
Oh what a life, fighting for the French;
We haven't got a wife or a nice little wench,
But we're all quite happy in an old French trench.

The next, sung slowly and dolefully, is a "billets" song seemingly composed in the summer or autumn of 1915, though it shows signs of having been tinkered with in 1916:

I like to hear the news from the Dardanelles,
I like to hear the whistle of the Allyman's shells.
I like to hear the rifle-fire,
I like to see the blinking Allymans retire.
I like to hear the click-click of the pick and spade.
(The French, they are no bon.)
Look out, look out, the gas clouds are coming:
Go and get your respirator on.

That is banal generalization; what follows is a totally different sort of song, satirical and particular (with variations as required by various units):

Miles behind the lines, } *bis*
Behind the lines, }
We've got a sergeant-major,
Who's never seen a gun;
He's mentioned in despatches
For drinking privates' rum,
And when he sees old Jerry
You should see the b——r run
Miles behind the lines!

The next song is *Standing on the Firestep*, which goes to two-four time, as we know from all we possess of the score (the first four lines), and which is one of the few songs actually composed by soldiers:

Standing on the firestep at half-past nine,
Oh! Gorblimey, aint it cold!
Waiting for the whistle that the sergeant-major blows,
Oh! Gorblimey, aint it cold!

Nothing to drink but water,
No more rum from the Quarter,[1]
We don't get half of what we oughter!
Oh! Gorblimey, aint it cold! (*with intensity*)
Standing on the firestep, etc. (*almost whispering*).

[1] Short for Quartermaster.

No more rum from the Quarter,
We don't get half of what we oughter,
He drinks it all himself and gives us water.
Oh! Gorblimey, *aint* it cold! (*now completely frozen*).

But *Has Everybody Got His Iron Rations?* sung to the tune of *The Lost Chord*, is more "literary"; the satire, too, is against red tape and not against the wide-felt grievance of the rank and file at what they considered, often rightly, as the injustice of "the Quarter Bloke":

Has everybody got his iron rations,
His bully, his biscuits and his tea?
Has everybody got his iron rations?
He'd better have a look and see,
For he can't go to war without them,
In this war with Germany.
Has everybody got his iron rations?
He'd better have a look and see.

Has everybody got his water bottle,
Filled from the water cart?
Has everybody got his water bottle?
He'd better see before we start.
We've only got to march fifty kilos,
And out of it we mustn't have a drink,
And we must be fresh when we get there,
As we always are—I don't think!

Has everybody got his clean socks on?
Has everybody washed his feet?
Is everybody letting his moustache grow?—
Not very long but neat.
For these are the things that count most
In the war with Germany.
Has everybody got his clean socks on?
He'd better have a look and see.

The reference to moustaches points to the date of composition as 1916, since in that year, for a while, it was deemed to be a crime to shave the upper lip.

Two songs of which we have not yet been able to obtain the words are mentioned by Mr. J. B. Priestley, who says: "[The editors] have missed that fine anti-heroic and ironical chorus[1] which demands that everybody, including the women

[1] *Send out the Army and the Navy:* now found: see p. 66.

and the boys' brigade, shall be sent out to the Front except the singers, and that other lengthy one which tells you what the private, corporal, sergeant, and other ranks said, and has the constant refrain, 'But there's none so rare, As can compare, With Kitchener's New Ar-mee.' " (The latter: music-hall.)

Sometimes a song was arrestingly short; the following, known by its first line, was fairly bellowed to the tune of *In and Out the Window*. This was sung both on the march and in billets, often in humorously-caustic reply to an unusally picturesque story.

His comrades don't believe him,
His comrades don't believe him,
His comrades don't believe him,
He's such a —— liar.

Much longer and sung to the tune of *Don't Go down the Mine, Daddy*, was the following, which represents a parody of that song, like most Army parodies, very direct, very objective.

Don't go up the Line, Daddy,
Don't go up the Line,
Shells are coming over
Four at a time.
Four at a time, Daddy,
Four at a time.
Don't go up the Line, Daddy,
Don't go up the Line.

Some are four-point-two, Daddy,
Some are five-point-nine,
Don't go up the Line, Daddy,
Don't go up the Line.
Shells are coming over, Daddy,
Some are five-point-nine,
Don't go up the Line, Daddy,
Don't go up the Line.

The mine goes up at nine, Daddy,
The mine goes up at nine.
Don't go up the Line, Daddy,
Don't go up the Line.
Shells are coming over,
Some are five-point-nine,
The mine goes up at nine, Daddy,
Don't go up the Line.

Very different and probably pre-War of the folk-song variety, the next therefore belongs to the third group of Songs. It was sung to an air not unlike that of *Bonnie Dundee*. It is usually known as *We Pushed the Damper In*, for reasons obvious enough from a glance at these verses:

Oh, we pushed the damper in,
Yes, we pushed the damper in,
And the smoke went up the chimney just the same.
So we pulled the damper out,
Yes, we pulled the damper out,
And the smoke went up the chimney just the same.
So we pushed the damper in,
Yes, we pushed the damper in—
and so on, interminably.

One of the most popular marching songs of late 1916 and early 1917 was the music-hall song, *The Roses round the Door*. There was a special effect (the only excuse for the song being given here, for we exclude unadulterated music-hall songs) introduced by "second" voices chiming in with the small symphonic movement, "without a shirt," thus:—

The roses round the door
(without a shirt) *pp*
Make me love mother more;
(without a shirt) *pp*
I'll meet my sweetheart Flo
(without a shirt) *ff*
And friends I used to know.
(without a shirt) *pp*
They'll be all there to meet me,
Just imagine how they'll greet me,
When I get back,
When I get back
To my home in Tennessee
(Without a Shirt). *ff*

Composed in 1914 and sung in that year and until about April 1915 was this marching song:

Poor Kaiser Bill is feeling ill,
The Crown Prince he's gone barmy,
And we don't care a ——
For old Von Kluck
And all his bleeding great army.

Rogerum, a favourite, was pre-War and partly civilian. Now the stock anthem of Toc H.

The sign *, as in the main glossary, means technical, official, or semi-official.

† Indicates that the word is to be found also in the main glossary.

*"A" Frame.—A wooden frame, shaped like the letter A; inverted and fitted in the bottom of water-logged trenches. Planks were then stretched from one cross-piece to the next, to make a rough pathway. In *The B.E.F. Times* "A" Frames are said "to keep up the sides of our trenches"; see the issue of March 5, 1917.

Angels of Christ.—Army Ordnance Corps. Blasphemy was very rarely employed in the soldiers' terminology, however much they may have blasphemed (for the most part technically but not morally) in their "bad language."

†Archie.—Has pride of place in *The Wipers Times*, No. 2, i.e. February 26, 1916, when this gun was a new feature at the Front. A variant: *Flaming Onion*.

*Awkward Squad.—A small group of men (as in *squad-drill*) detailed for intensive instruction in those points of drill in which they are slow to learn.

*Ayrton Fan.—A loose flapping piece of canvas on a wooden handle; used to disperse gas.

Baloo, or Berloo.—Bailleul. Probably Albert, Armentières, Bailleul, and Ypres were the towns most familiar to the British soldier on the Western front.

Batty.—Demented, mad; or merely a little mad, extremely eccentric.

Beetle Off.—An echo-allusive variant of *buzz off*. Air Force term.

*Before You Come Up.—The most magnificent variant was: "Before your number was dry."

*Bent.—Spoiled, ruined, e.g. "a good man bent" or even "good tea bent."

Boko.—Tommyese for French *beaucoup*. Also pre- and post-War general slang for nose.

Bottle and Glass.—Rhyming slang for the good old English word denoting the posterior, or as a University wit has put it: *sedendum humanum*. Two other nouns, barred in polite society as generative and therefore immoral, are very cleverly represented in rhyming slang: *Berkeley* is short for *Berkeley Hunt*, and *Hampton* short for *Hampton Wick*.

Brag.—A game not quite obsolete in 1914–18; *Bank* (sometimes called *Banker*) was popular. But more typically Army games were *House* and *Crown-and-Anchor*; a change of popularity is observable in the following quotation from J. Brunlees Patterson's *Life in the Ranks*, 1885: ". . . brag and bank, those common games among soldiers everywhere."

Cage.—A barbed-wire enclosure for prisoners of war. A temporary prison for our own men was by them called *the bird-cage*. Shakespeare used *cage* = prison in 1593 and the word was good English in the seventeenth century; in the next century it became slang and finally it was degraded to the status of cant.

Charlie Chaplin.—A C.C. moustache, worn by officers; about half an inch in width. The *Tooth brush* moustache, which averaged about twice the length of a C.C., was rather the "property" of the rank and file, who would probably have been crimed for dumb insolence if they had dared to usurp the privilege residing in a *Charlie Chaplin*; but it was only in 1916 that the men *had* to wear a moustache, while officers were intermittently encouraged to do so.

Cherry Ripe.—Rhyming slang for pipe.

*China.—Short for *China plate*, rhyming slang for mate. *Old* was frequently added to the vocative in the usual affectionate way that *old* has.

†Chum.—Dates back to the seventeenth century, when it was applied to intimate friends at Oxford or Cambridge. *The Dictionary of the Canting Crew*, 1690, defines it as "a chamber-fellow, or constant companion". The word appears also in the dictionaries of Dr. Johnson and Captain Grose.

Chupatty.—Usual nineteenth-century spelling *chow-patty*; Hindustani *chapati*. The N.E.D.: "A small cake of unleavened bread, generally made of coarse wheaten meal, flattened with the hand, and baked on a griddle". One never saw an Indian soldier without a chupatty; this he managed to cook for himself even at Gallipoli.

Chuprassy.—Hindustani *chaprasi*, the wearer of a *chapras* or official badge. In civilian use, a messenger, etc.; in Army use, an Indian orderly.

Come the Acid.—To swank. *Put the acid on* meant to ask someone for money or some other favour.

Come Unstuck.—To fail; to be reduced in rank. E.g. "he properly came unstuck". By the men used in a general sense; by officers only in the second sense, not uninfluenced by the French *dégommé*, ungummed, *i.e.* reduced in rank.

*Commandeer.—To take possession of, more or less legitimately, as in the case of an officer "commandeering a billet"; illegitimately in that of a private bluffing himself regally into getting something by decisive "command".

Counterstrafe.—To *strafe* in retaliation. Officers' and artillery's word.

Cuckoo.—Only in the phrase, "lousy as a cuckoo". But used also as a verb, e.g. "we got all cuckooed", we became lousy.

Der Tag.—German for "The Day", which meant variously: "The day when we Germans declare war on" or "conquer England", "come into our own". Popularized by journalists; used by officers, often in derivative sense for any much-desired date or goal.

Dirt.—Shells; e.g. "Jerry put over a lot of dirt last night".

Dog and Maggot.—Biscuit and cheese. Regular Army.

Do One's Bit.—To enlist and, more especially, go to one of the fronts.

*Dump.—A place, in the open, where all sorts of military requisites are stored. Divisional dump (jocularly called "divisional toy-shop") was usually about five miles behind the front line.

Dulay, Dupan.—Respectively milk, bread; from *du lait*, *du pain*, in the belief that these two pairs of words were just two words. E.g. "Pass the dulay", "give me a piece of dupan", "there's no dulay or dupan".

Erfs, or Oofs.—Tommyese for French *œufs*, eggs.

†Fat, Rag: to Chew the.—The distinction between the two phrases did not exist before the War; these phrases belong to the Regular Army.

*†Fatigues.—This was a pre-War Regular-Army term.

*Firestep.—The step running right along the forward side of a trench on which all soldiers alertly manning the trench stand to watch or to fire.

Five Nine.—Variant: *five-point-nine*; a much hated, very destructive German high-explosive shell; the cannon, too, that fired it.

*Fixed Rifle.—A sniper's rifle so clamped as to cover unerringly a given exposed point in the enemy's trench, sap, latrine, etc. An empiric method that worked excellently.

*Flammenwerfer.—A flame-thrower, whether German or ours. Liquid fire. A devilish engine of war introduced in 1916 (see *The Wipers Times*, March 20, 1916); it was very difficult to use.

†Foot-Slogger.—Variants in the 1890's were *mud-crusher*, *beetle-crusher*, *worm-crusher*, of which the first two were occasionally heard in 1914–18. By *foot-warbler* Grose means *foot-wabbler*, *foot-wobbler*.

Four Two.—Variant: *four-point-two*; an efficient German shell (and cannon), employed where it was foolish to send a 5·9 on a boy's errand.

Frightfulness.—Originally *German frightfulness* and journalese; but adopted widely by officers, little by the ranks, to signify cruelty, tyranny, injustice, bullying, and cognate horrors. Sometimes used jocularly.

*"G" and "Q".—Short for *G side* and *Q side*, respectively that part of a divisional (or corps or army) staff which attended to fighting and operations, and that which looked after discipline and maintenance of the troops.

*Gas Alert.—Both a variant of *gas alarm* and the period of time during which one wore or carried at the ready the gas-helmet. "At the alert" meant carrying the helmet ready for wearing.

Gone Dis.—Disconnected, i.e. a little mad. Signalese.

Go Over.—*I.e.* go over the top, hop the bags, leave the trench for an assault.

*G.S.—General Service, always with waggon or some other machine or instrument of war.

Guardsman's Wriggle.—Exaggerated salute affected by the Guards. Variant, "tickling his ear".

*Hardening Squad.—Men being trained before returning to France after convalescence.

Harry Randle.—Properly *H. Randall*, the name of a pugilist famous about 1860. A handle. (Cf. *Rhyming Slang.*)

Heavy.—A cannon of large calibre, whether field-gun or howitzer or "naval" gun; whether "ours" or "theirs." Owing to the shattering detonation, they "put the wind up the troops" far more than the amazingly swift "whizz-bang" or "75" or the barking, vicious 18-pounder, even though the smaller shells came too quickly to be dodged, whereas one could judge the incidence of a 5·9 for example.

Holding Back.—Trying to avoid being cured of wound or sickness.

In Bed or Out of Barracks.—Exhortation on Sunday afternoons to men either to "get down to it" or to leave the barrack-room.

Jane Shore.—Rhyming slang for whore. In 1872 J. C. Hotten gave the variant *sloop of war* for the same.

†Jerry.—Possibly (even probably), however, the origin of the word lay in the appearance of a group of German tin-hats worn by their lessees: in outline they looked surprisingly like an array of chamber-pots, vulgarly known as "jerries."

†Johnsons.—One of the "advertisements" in *The Wipers Times* of February 12, 1916, has: "The Johnsons. A Shout. A Scream. A Roar", a most apt description of their advent and explosion.

Kilos.—Short for *kilometres*, only very rarely for *kilogrammes*.

*Khaki.—In 1885 we read in *Life in the Ranks* of "drab-coloured linen clothing called *kharkhi*". The term still applies to the lighter English military clothing in the East; about 1900 the term was widened to embrace the thick clothing of the approximately same colour worn in more temperate countries.

*Lewis.—Short for our Lewis machine gun, which was unknown in 1914 and which was employed only by battalions. It was easier to carry and more rapidly adjusted than the Vickers and the Maxim machine guns.

Little Grey Home in the West.—Rhyming slang for vest. From the popular song of that name.

†Loaf of Bread.—Also rhyming slang for head; in this sense, often abbreviated to *loaf*. (See also *Strike me dead*.)

Louse-Trap.—Woollen body-belt.

*The Major.—For Sergeant-Major; in vocative: "Major".

Ma'alish.—Never mind! It doesn't matter. From Arabic.

Maghnoon.—Fool, dolt, idiot. Also from Arabic.

Mince Pies.—Rhyming slang for eyes.

Mongey.—Food. From the French *manger*, to eat; *du manger*, colloquial for food.

Mons Man.—One of the original B.E.F. in France. Popularized by journalists, who, however, got it from the troops.

*Observer.—One who observed with telescope for either the artillery or the infantry, the former usually having the better *O. Pip.* After 1916 even battalions had a regular section of observers, ten or twelve men with a corporal; brigade and divisional observers had also an officer called the Intelligence Officer. The fullest "amateur" account of infantry-observing that we have seen is in *Frank Honywood* (see *Three Personal Records of the War*). In the *B.E.F. Times* of March 5, 1917, we have, in the "Alphabet", these lines:

> *O* the Observer, who sees many sights,
> Such as stout German generals dancing in tights,
> And performing the most inexplicable rites,
> From his O-Pip in one of our trenches.

On the Square.—Doing squad-drill. Its general sense "on the level", "honourable", originated as a Masonic term.

*Parapet.—The forward side (topped by sandbags) of a trench, *parados* the rearward side. Both words are taken over direct from the early French works on fortification; they have changed somewhat from their first significations.

†Pedlar.—See main glossary. More probably *Pedlar Palmer* goes back to the days of the palmers, i.e. the pilgrims who, returning from the Holy Land, carried a palm-branch.

Pen and Ink.—Rhyming slang for stink.

†Pushing up Daisies.—This phrase was perhaps influenced by the much weaker pre-War civilian slang, "to turn up one's toes to the daisies", which dates as far back as Barham's *Ingoldsby Legends*, 1837; after about 1880, the civilian phrase was often abbreviated to "turn up one's toes".

Rainbow.—A recruit arriving just after a battle. A 1917–18 word.

Raspberry.—Short for *raspberry tart*, rhyming slang for heart.

A Raspberry.—Showing contempt by blowing through the closed fist; e.g. "Give 'im a raspberry!" We have heard of a soldier who, every time that he went out of camp, turned round and solemnly—almost ceremonially, certainly ceremoniously—gave the Army a raspberry.

READ A SHIRT.—Con a shirt for lice. The phrase, belonging to 1917–18, became generic for *chatt* (cf.).

REVET.—Originally to face an embankment or wall with masonry. In 1914–18, to strengthen a trench by facing it not with masonry but with stakes, or faggots, or wooden frames, or even (though this usage is loose) with sandbags.

*†RHYMING SLANG.—Writing in 1858, J. C. Hotten (lexicographer of slang, and publisher) said that rhyming slang was introduced about 1843 by chaunters (street singers of low or very topical ballads) and patterers (cheapjacks relying on their eloquence) as distinct from costermongers. But probably, as in effect he admitted in a later edition, this very simple type of "disguise" slang, which was considerably more obvious than the back-slang so general in the nineteenth century, was probably known to, and spoken by, costermongers as early as 1850, while nearly all Cockneys were more or less acquainted with it by 1860. Neither rhyming slang nor the earlier-arising back-slang was one half so difficult as the cant (i.e. the lingo of thieves and other criminals, of gipsies and vagabonds) prevailing from about 1500 to about 1800, and persisting, we believe, to this day; but rhyming slang, though certainly much less interesting than cant, is more amusing. There exists a delightful specimen of rhyming-slang verse, entitled *The Dream*, of which we can, unfortunately, quote only the first two of the five stanzas:

> I was sittin' alone by the fireside one night
> A-warmin' me plates of meat;
> When wot should I 'ear but a knock on the door
> Which caused me old raspberry to beat.
>
> So I puts down me glass and old cherry ripe
> Which I 'olds in me German band,
> And I goes to the top of the apples and pears [*stairs*]
> Wiv me dooks all ready to land.

RICKO.—Ricochet.

RORY O'MORE.—Rhyming slang for door. In 1872 it seems to have stood for floor.

ROUND THE HOUSES.—Same for trousers, owing to the slovenly pronunciation as *trouse's*.

Rum Jar.—A species of trench-mortar bomb, liked much less than rum.

†Run.—A variant was *run-in*.

Sandbag.—To sandbag a person was to hit him over the head or neck with a sandbag filled about one quarter with sand or earth. A quiet way of stunning a man. Deserters lurking and living in the woods near Etaples practised this method of obtaining money, and the principle spread among deserters and other "toughs" on the outskirts of the camps in England.

*Scatty.—A little mad.

Scran.—Food in general, a meal in particular: both senses date back, in the Regular Army, to about 1870. In the eighteenth century the word meant: refuse; broken victuals; hence, food.

Sergeant-Major.—Variant *sergeant-major's*. Tea, as well as being called *char*, was often known as *sergeant-major*: on the theory or assumption that both officers' mess and the ranks' cook-house made tea for the S.M. whenever he wanted it. At first, *sergeant-major* was the term reserved for specially good and strong brews of tea, but afterwards it came to mean any cup or dixie of tea drunk between meals.

Silent Percy.—A frequent synonym of *rubber gun* (which cf.).

*Snipers.—Those riflemen who were specially detailed to pick off the enemy rashly exposing themselves at marked points. After 1916, a section of snipers was to be found attached to brigade and divisional headquarters but no longer to battalion H.Q.; each section had several telescopically-sighted rifles. Occasionally snipers worked in conjunction with observers.

†Sock.—Cf. the phrase "put the wood in the hole" used when a man left a door open.

Stick It.—Keep going, endure; e.g. "'E stuck it like a bleedin' 'ero".

Strike Me Dead.—Head. (Rhyming Slang.)

*Sump.—A method of draining a trench by digging an adjacent hole, pit or well; especially for the removal of liquid mud.

Taped.—Tapes were sometimes, in the open, laid to indicate the "jump-off" of an attack. "Jerry has us taped," *i.e.* has the range; "The S.M.'s got you taped," *i.e.* weighed-up.

†Tit-for.—The phrase *tit-for-tat* was also an unexpected euphemism to express enthusiastic assent: *too bloody true*. Thus: "The sergeant-major's an old bastard!" which the reply was: "Tit-for-tat, old chum"; or: "We're for it to-night mate," which evoked "Tit-for-tat!" Strangely enough, the evasion of the barred word led to additional emphasis: instead of saying "too bloody true" or its euphemism, hard-bitten soldiers would often combine the two into "tit-for-bloody-tat."

Tom Tit.—Rhyming slang for a natural function expressed in vigorous monosyllabic "Saxon"; cf. *Pony and trap* as rhyming slang for the same function in low slang.

*Traverses.—"Thick sandbag partitions built in trenches, to prevent enfilading, and to confine the effects of shell-fire". (Mottram.)

*Traversing.—"Sweeping fire by pivoted machine-guns". (Mottram.)

*Trench and Sap.—The former represents a line of defence: *front trench*, *support trench*, *reserve trench*, for the most part running approximately parallel to the "fortified deep ditches" of the enemy. The latter represents a line of communication, whether from the rear to the front or from a trench to an emplacement, kitchen, latrine, store, etc. But the main link between safety and peril was called a communication trench. To modify, then: a sap is a "ditch" less important, less pretentious and less lengthy than is a trench. The regular trench-diggers were called sappers, but usually it was the ordinary infantry which dug the saps and trenches. Sappers also dug mines: here they were often superintended by the Engineers.

*Trench Feet.—Feet frost-bitten in the trenches; at one period it was a crime to get trench feet, but no humane commander enforced the penalty or even made the charge.

*Trench Fever.—A kind of rheumatic fever induced by the conditions of trench life.

*Trip Wire.—Wire laid low to catch the ankles; usually further than the ordinary entanglements from the trench defended. A frequent cause of strong language.

Troops, the.—A semi-jocular form of referring to oneself; used instead of *I*, *me*; e.g. "the troops could do with a leave", slang for a period of leave, furlough. Cf. the *we* of Royalty and newspaper editors.

*Vermoral Sprayer.—For the dispersion of low-lying gas, fetid smells, etc.

*Vickers.—The Vickers Machine Gun. Like the Maxim M.G. it required a firm emplacement; maintained continuous fire; confined to Brigade and Division. Both more accurate than the Lewis, but more cumbersome.

Wants His Liver Scraping.—Used of an officer or N.C.O. when he was in a nasty temper or a bad mood; e.g. "The R.S.M. didn't 'arf want his liver scraping this morning".

War and Strife.—Rhyming slang for wife.

Woolly Bear.—The burst, especially the resulting smoke, of any big H.E. shell.

*Waterproof Sheet.—A sheet just big enough to lay one's blankets on with care, whether in a funk-hole, a dug-out, a billet, or out in the open (i.e. in bivouac). It had, at the edges, perforations that enabled one to use it as a mackintosh either by itself or over one's greatcoat. Frequently used to prevent the entry of gas into dug-out or pill-box, and as an awning against either sun or rain. Considered indispensable, it formed part of "battle-order"; it was then carried on the back.

*Working Party.—A party detailed to dig a trench, build a road or a dug-out, etc. A *carrying party*: a party detailed to carry rations (though this was more properly called a *ration party*), picks and shovels, gas-cylinders, "A" frames, etc.

Y'Ibn.—Scoundrel, sometimes affectionately for scamp. Often *Y'Ibn Elkalp*, literally, son of a dog. Arabic; among natives a deadly insult.

The following should be added to the main list:—

Stand-to, boys, the Jocks are going over!

belonged to the latter half of the War. A fairly kindly way of making fun of kilted soldiers and of the excessive popularity they enjoyed with journalists and women; spoken with exaggerated and comic respect on the advent of Highland troops—but without any mean feeling of jealousy.

Soldiers? I've sh——'em!

was an expression of contempt for another unit (especially if slovenly).

I'm in the boat, push off!

This is equivalent to: "Curse you (or, —— you), Jack, I'm all right." Of this latter phrase the original form, i.e. in 1914, was:

Dieu et mon droit,
F—— you, Jack, I'm all right,

pronounced with a strong Cockney accent, *droit* rhyming with *right*. By 1916, the original saying had been almost completely forgotten.

To the chant of *The Girl Overboard*, the men in some units added this stanza:

But see, another lovely girl has fallen overboard:
Who will save her?
I will!
Who are you?
Tommy Atkins home on leave.

Whereupon, as a rule, all those present would burst into the song of

"Tommy, Tommy Atkins, 'e's a good un, 'eart an' 'and".

No names, no pack drill

was used by a soldier relating something and wishing not to involve another by mentioning his name; it was taken over from the Regular Army.

Where did that one go?

is actually short for

Where did that one go to, Herbert,
Where did that one go?

which comes from a popular War-time song; it was the abbreviation that the soldiers made into a well-used saying and sometimes followed up with: Theirs or ours?

It's a way they have in the Army,

like *I'm in the boat, push off*, was a 1916–18 phrase and much more frequently employed by the officers than by the men.

But the most witty of the "sayings" recorded in this postscript is

Who pulled your chain?

A snub for anyone intruding into a conversation.

That is biting, the next is ironic with a jocular despair:

The first seven years are the worst,

often prefaced with "Cheer up!"; and usually either Job's comfort to a grouser or a whimsical encouragement to oneself; it was rarely heard before that 1916–17 winter which drove the iron fairly into men's hearts and souls.

Now we come to a chant, one belonging to the small group of which "Help, help, there's a woman overboard!" constituted the other most elaborate example, which was in this manner:—Someone would rush into hut or billet or dug-out (for it was rarely heard on the march) and exclaim: "Have you heard the news?" It was "the thing" for everybody to dovetail this with: "What news?" The wag would then say, in a tone of either pained or triumphant surprise: "The old squire has been foully murdered". To continue in the words of Mr. J. B. Priestley, "this was only a beginning. It was like a detective tale dramatized in the form of a classical Greek play, with messenger and chorus, speaking alternately".

Much more terse was the following dialogue:

A: This is a *bloody* war. What shall we do about it?
B: You can have it! (*or*, You can keep it!)

Still more terse was "The Mad Major," as applied to any very eccentric or excessively daring officer, especially if he were of that particular rank. The term arose from a legend (current early in the War) about a bloodthirsty officer said to conduct, single-handed, astonishingly bold and successful raids on the enemy's line. *Identity undetermined.*

Three calls that were wrongly omitted from the essay or bugle-calls are worthy of mention. *Pickets* was thus accompanied:

> Come and do a picket, boys, come and do a guard;
> 'Tisn't very easy, boys, 'tisn't very hard.

Dinner is served, generally known to the ranks as *Hot Potatoes*, had these words:

Pick 'em up, pick 'em up, hot potatoes, hot potatoes, hot potatoes;
Pick 'em up, pick 'em up, hot potatoes, hot potatoes, oh!

One of the most famous of all bugle-calls—part of it has been used by R. H. Mottram in one of his *Spanish Farm* Trilogy stories—is *Sick Parade*:

> Sixty-four, ninety-four!
> He'll never go sick no more:
> The poor b——r's dead.

It may be noted that nearly all, if not absolutely all, these words to bugle-calls (whether here or in the main part of the book) existed in the Regular Army before the War, although very few existed before about 1890.

P.P.S. to Glossary.

Check.—An alternative for *Ticket* (cf. pp. 170–1).

*Offensive.—An attack on a large scale. Also used by G.H.Q. in 1916–7 for a frame of mind that it desired to encourage in front-line troops in order to keep the enemy harassed. Enquiries were sent to commanding officers: did they consider themselves "sufficiently offensive" that day. The word soon became a joke and—if one thought how those lived from whom it originated—an irritation.

Piache.—Mad; an analogy of *stone mad*, sometimes *stone piache*. Frequently used by men with Indian service.

Wipe Out.—To destroy a thing completely; to capture or to kill, or to account for by capture and killing, a body of men so that not one is left. "The battalion was wiped out" may mean "to a man," or "almost to a man."